

Bible Baskets

Study Outlines on 12 Books of the Bible

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turned Bible Teacher*

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*Dedicated
to
Bible Lovers worldwide
who support
my Bible Teaching ministry
as its beneficiaries!*

Bible Baskets

When the Blessing Centre, the National Headquarters of the Blessing Youth Mission (1971), was dedicated in February 1979, I had an inner urge to use this facility for conducting regular Bible Studies. Fascinated with the Book of Isaiah, I started giving 90-minute Bible Studies on Sunday evenings from March, covering one Chapter per class. We completed this Series in March 1983. Bible-lovers from various Churches in Vellore attended the sessions. Simultaneously I gave studies from the Acts of the Apostles during Tuesdays. Then followed Romans and Hebrews. These regular weekly Bible Studies were soon discontinued lest my outstation programmes and field visits got curtailed. Little did I think that someday these Study Outlines would be released as a book like this. The papers on which I had written my original outlines have even become brittle! A generation which knows not this history is born!

The Outlines of similar Bible Studies I conducted elsewhere on various occasions have also found a place in this compilation. They are Matthew, Ephesians (1987), 1 Thessalonians (1980), 1 & 2 Timothy (1988), James (1989), 1 & 2 Peter (1982 & 1986) and Jonah (1978). I've not listed them here chronologically. I wish I have had time

to give such studies in all the Books of the Bible. It was not possible with my multifacious commitments in God's work. Instead of waiting for a few more years to prepare Outlines for the remaining books, I thought it wise to compile and release what's readily available. In any case, as usual, my Outlines have references to almost all the Books of the Bible. Even in a 3-year Bible College course, not all the 66 Books are covered in detail.

What amazes me is that I hardly had to edit the Outlines prepared over 40 years ago! I search in vain for words to thank God who has led me in the straight path without any zig-zagging! "This is the Lord's doing; and its marvellous in our eyes!"

At this juncture I would like to say a few words to the younger generation of preachers. Dare not to climb on the pulpit, be it a Church Service, Chapel Worship, Bible Study or Cottage Meeting, without a well-prepared and neatly-written Outline. This would hold the attention of the gathering and also keep you from deviating from your central theme. Don't tell me you are not gifted for writing. I'm not talking about writing essays or articles, but only Outlines. Writing is hardly 50% by gifting; the rest is discipline and hard work. Read the next para carefully —

God was the first writer (Ex 32:16). When Moses broke the first tablets in anger, God "wrote again!" (34:1). Then God told Moses to "write" (v27). The Prophets "wrote" both history and what God told them to convey to people. Isaiah

"wrote" (2 Chr 26:22; Isa 8:1; 30:8). Jeremiah "wrote" (Jer 30:2; 36:2). Even when one scroll was burnt, God asked him to "write again" (36:28). Ezekiel "wrote" (Ezek 43:11b). God commanded Habakkuk to "write" the vision so the reader may immediately "run" — Action! (Hab 2:2). One reason why the forthcoming generations do not know the vision and the message of the Founders is that those were not documented. Moses and the Prophets "wrote" about the coming Messiah. It was their writings Jesus frequently quoted to prove His messiahship (Jn 1:45; Lk 24:25-27, 44-47). Luke "wrote" the Gospel for the life of Christ, and the Acts of the Apostles for the life of the early Church (Lk 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-3). The Apostles "wrote" amidst their hectic itinerant ministry. How could we have learnt Christian doctrine and Church discipline without their Epistles? John "wrote" the Book of Revelation in his old age (Rev 1:11,19; 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14).

This book, *Bible Baskets*, would not have been a reality if I had not taken pains to neatly write down from day one my sermon outlines amidst my crushing ministerial responsibilities over the years. My earlier Outline books, namely, *Apples of Gold* (1979), *Little Foxes* (1984), *Five Loaves Two Fish* (1998), *Bible Treasures* (2013), *Bible Pearls* (2016), *Bible College* (2021) and *Bible Foundation* (2012) are equipping pulpiteers across the globe.

While compiling these Outlines of 1979 to 1993, I felt the need to give a comprehensive Introduction to each book.

I consulted atleast 10 Reference Books like Commentaries and Bible Dictionaries besides Study Bibles. Not everyone can have access to so many reference works. Synchronizing the views of various authors was another job. I request you to do read through each Introduction before studying the Outlines. You don't need to quote my name while using the Outlines in part or as a whole. If you use one Chapter Outline per week, the Book of Isaiah alone can take you for more than a year. The congregation may be asked to read the next Chapter in their Bibles before coming to the next Bible Study. Besides analytical studies on certain entire books, there are at least 150 Chapter Outlines.

I cannot but profusely thank my 10-member Team which worked behind the scene. Mrs. Shobana Immanuel tirelessly typed out the entire material herein. Mr. K. Gunasekaran did all the pagesetting superbly. The proofreading team consisted of Mrs. Evangeline Jones, Mrs. Linetta Sampathkumar, Mrs. Caroline Mariajoseph, Mr. Sam Kaniston, Miss Jesintha Abraham, Mrs. Manoramy Wilson, Mrs. Mercy Daniel and Mrs. Jonesrani Satheesh. Mr. Pradeep Kumar (Chinnu) assisted in the cover design and related works. Each member of this Team is an extra-mile Christian with no compulsion whatsoever! God reward them richly!

Finally, a word about the name of the book, *Bible Baskets*. I looked at the numerous references to "baskets" in the Bible. Each one seems to say something specific about

the contents of this book. The Basket of Unleavened Bread was in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle (Ex 29:23; Lev 8:2). This speaks of "sanctification." The Basket of Firstfruits in Canaan portrays of our "victorious life" in Christ (Dt 26:2,4). The Domestic Basket of Dt 28:5 may mean "family life." Gideon's Basket of Bread and Meat may indicate "sustenance for God's Servants" (Judg 6:19). The Brick Baskets indicate the "heavy burden" to be lifted from God's people (Psa 81:5-7). Fig Baskets of Jeremiah predict "deliverance from bondage" (Jer 24:1-7). The Summer Fruit Basket of Amos' vision is a "forewarning" about the future judgment (Am 8:1-3). Paul's escape through a basket is a picture of "God's protection" in persecution (Acts 9:25; 2 Cor 11:33). This volume of twelve book-outlines is a proof of "God's miraculous power of multiplication" to feed thousands with even a balance of "*twelve baskets full!*"

27 April 2022

— R. Stanley

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Book of Isaiah

**Sunday Evening Sermons,
Blessing Centre, Vellore, India,
1979-1983**



Book of Isaiah

Isaiah was the greatest among the writing prophets. He carried on his ministry in Judah during the reign of four kings, BC 740 to 680, roughly 60 years (Isa 1:1). He was most sublime in his poetic style. He was a married man and a father of at least two sons (7:3; 8:3,18). The name “Isaiah” means, “The Lord saves” or “Salvation of the Lord.” He is called the “Messianic Prophet” as well as the “Evangelical Prophet.” As a prophet he was a messenger as well as a watchman. He vehemently condemned social injustice, carnal indulgence, confidence in the arm of flesh, pretense of orthodox religion and so on. His two sons were signs in Israel both for judgment and the mercy of God (8:18). Tradition says he was sawn asunder by Manasseh with a wooden saw when he was about 92 years old.

The Book of Isaiah is called a mini-Bible. It’s a Bible within the Bible. Its 66 chapters can be splendidly divided into two parts, Chapter 1 to 39 and 40 to 66, corresponding to the Old Testament and the New Testament having 39 and 27 books respectively. Isaiah’s 40th Chapter speaks about John the Baptist who appears at the beginning of the New Testament. Its 66th chapter ends with the final judgment and New Heaven & New Earth, like the Book of

Revelation (66:15-23). Wickedness is so strongly condemned in this book that Isaiah has employed almost all the Hebrew words for sin. He depicts the evil of the world, denounces it, and declares the future judgment against it.

The first 39 chapters speak of man’s great need for Salvation, and the remaining 27 chapters present God’s great provision of Salvation. The key word of this book is “Salvation.” We read about the “*Wells of Salvation*” (12:3), “*Joy of Salvation*” (25:9), “*Walls of Salvation*” (26:1), “*Everlasting Salvation*” (45:17), “*Day of Salvation*” (49:8), “*Feet of Heralds of Salvation*” (52:7), the “*Arm of Salvation*” (59:16), “*Garments of Salvation*” (61:10), “*Light of Salvation*” (62:1), and “*Spread of Salvation*” (52:10). The word “Salvation” appears 26 times in Isaiah but only 7 times in all the other prophets combined! No other OT prophet is more fully occupied with the redemptive work of Christ. In no other place, in the Scriptures written under the Law, is there so clear view of grace.

Isaiah 53 is the greatest single OT chapter prophesying the Messiah’s atoning work. It’s directly quoted about 10 times by NT writers: 52:15/Rom 15:21 ... 53:1/Jn 12:38; Rom 10:16 ... 53:4/Mt 8:17 ... 53:5/Rom 4:25; 1 Pet 2:24 ... 53:7,8/Acts 8:32,33 ... 53:9/1 Pet 2:22 ... 53:10/1 Cor 15:3 ... 53:12/Lk 22:37. The Book of Isaiah is sometimes called the Book of Romans of the Old Testament! Jesus quoted Isaiah fondly (Lk 4:17-19; Mt 13:14,15; 15:7). Apostle Paul calls Isaiah a very “bold” prophet (Rom 10:20).

Such an Old Testament book cannot but fascinate me a Bible Teacher. In the Sunday evening Bible Studies I conducted in the Blessing Centre, the National Headquarters of the Blessing Youth Mission (BYM), I delivered an analytical sermon on each of its 66 Chapters from March 1979 to March 1983. The attendees were from various Churches and denominations in and around Vellore. The actual outlines I used for teaching are given here in this section. You may use them for personal meditation, group study and pulpit preaching. Do go through the respective chapter atleast twice before using the outline. You may add your own notes to these outlines.

It's my prayer that the "Spirit of the Lord", who is the "Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding," the "Spirit of Counsel and Might," and the "Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord," would encourage you in your walk with God, and empower you in your work for Him (Isa 11:2).

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Isaiah Chapter 1

Ruin and Restoration

The entire Bible is the story of Redemption,
which means Restoration from Ruin.

The very first Chapter of Isaiah speaks about Ruin and
Restoration.

- God is introduced as —

The Holy One of Israel (v4)

The Mighty One of Israel (v24)

The Lord of Hosts (vv9,24)

- Places mentioned

Judah and Jerusalem (v1) — Divided

Zion (vv8,27) — Deserted

Sodom and Gomorrah (vv9,10) — Destroyed

The Ruin —

(1) Ruined fellowship

father ... children (v2)

ox ... owner (v3)

donkey ... master (v3)

(2) Ruined worship

sacrifices ... offerings (v11)

incense ... sabbath ... assemblies (v13)

feasts ... prayers (vv14,15)

(3) Ruined relationship

oppressor ... fatherless ... widow (vv16,17,23b)

(4) Ruined leadership

princes ... thieves ... bribes (v23)

judges ... counselors (v26)

(5) Ruined lifestyle

sinful ... iniquity ... revolt (vv4-6)

harlots ... murderers (v21)

sins ... dress ... (vv18,25)

(6) Ruined inheritance

cities burned ... desolate ... besieged (vv7,8)

good of the land ... silver ... vine (vv19-22)

The Restoration —

+ As the Holy One of Israel,
He would restore pure worship
and holy living (2 & 5)

+ As the Mighty One of Israel,
He would restore inheritance,
fellowship and relationship (1, 6 & 3)

+ As the Lord of Hosts,
He would restore godly leadership (4).

Four kings (v1) —

King Uzziah ... Pride (2 Chr 26)

King Jotham ... Good king (2 Chr 27)

King Ahaz ... Not good (2 Chr 28)

King Hezekiah ... Good king (2 Chr 29-32)

No steady leadership — One good, one bad!

Isaiah Chapter 2

The Lord alone!

A repeated statement:

The Lord alone shall be exalted (vv11,17)

Stumbling blocks in our life which obstruct the exaltation of the Lord to preeminence —

(1) Unholy alliance

Eastern ways ... soothsayers ... foreigners (v6)

Psa 1:1

2 Cor 6:14-18

(2) Materialism

silver ... gold ... treasures ... horses ... chariots (v7)

Mt 13:22

1 Tim 6:6-11

:17-19

(3) Idolatry

The work of our own hands (vv8,9)

1 Cor 10

Ex 32:1-6 ... *to lead us*

Hos 14:3

(4) Self-pride

lofty looks ... haughtiness (vv11,17)

Js 4:6-17 ... *arrogance ... boasting*

(5) Trust on man

man who has breath (v22)

Psa 146:1-5 ... *princes ... his plans*

Isa 40:15-17 ... *nations ... less than nothing*

Rom 3:4 ... *God true ... man liar*

Isaiah Chapter 3

Well with the righteous; ill with the wicked!

“Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them.

Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him” (vv10,11)

THE CAUSES	THE CURSES v11	THE CURE v10
1) Sins of the Tongue + Hand (v8) + Psa 15 + 1 Sam 2:3/Js 3:5	1) Removal of Bread + Water (v1) Disease, Infirmary (vv17,24)	1) Bread + Water + Healing + Ex 23:25 + Mt 6:25,33 Lk 10:41,42 Seek Jesus, the Bread, the Water!
2) Impudence Immodesty Sodom's sin Loss of shame + Gen 13:13 18:20,21 19:4,5	2) Loss of Divine guidance; Collapse of rule (vv2-7)	2) Perfect guidance in life + Isa 30:9,15,20,21 Regard the Word of God!
3) Covetousness Ill-treatment of the poor (vv14,15) + Js 5:1-5	3) Shattering of provisions & comforts of life (vv18-24)	3) Provisions + Comforts + Psa 127 [of life + Psa 128 (House, children, wife, table, etc.) <i>Out of Zion!</i> <i>Fear the Lord ... 128:1</i> <i>Depend on Him!</i>
4) Haughtiness Wantonness Deception Pride (v16)	4) Death Desolation (vv 25,26)	4) Protection + Preservation + Psa 91 (especially v16) Worship God! Adore Him! 91:2

Isaiah Chapter 4

Four Blessings from God

Literally — Millennium following the Tribulation
eg) v1, Scarcity of men due to 3:25,26

- Seven duplets in this chapter —

- v1 (1) Bread / Apparel — “Name” (v1)
- v2 (2) The Branch (of the Lord) — Christ
The Fruit (of the Earth) — We
the Church (Isa 53:11)
- vv3,4 (3) Filth of the daughters (of Zion)
Blood of Jerusalem
- (4) Spirit of Judgment
Spirit of Burning
- v5 (5) Every dwelling place (OUT)
The Assemblies (IN)
- v5 (6) Day — Cloud + Smoke
Night — Flaming Fire
- v6 (7) Heat — Shadow
Storm + Rain — Refuge + Shelter

- The Message — “Four Blessings from God”

- (1) Salvation through Christ the Branch (v2)

- (Isaiah 53:11)
 - a) Branch of King David (Jer 23:5,6/Zech 9:9)
“Behold your King!” — Matthew
 - b) Branch, the Lord’s Servant (Zech 3:8/Isa 42:1)
“Behold, My Servant!” — Mark

- c) Branch, the Man (Zech 6:12)
“Behold, the Man!” — Mark
- d) Branch of the Lord God (Isa 4:2/40:9)
“Behold, your God!” — John

- (2) Sanctification through the Spirit (vv3,4)

- “Filth” — Before God (Ch 3)
- “Blood” — Before men (1 Jn 3:15)
Cleansing of Calvary
Purifying of Pentecost
Judgment (1 Pet 4:17)
Burning (Mt 3:11,12 / Rom 5:5)

- (3) Steerage (Guidance) (v5)

- Ex 13:21 | The Scriptures for us today
Dt 1:31-33 | (Num 9:23)

- (4) Security/Safety (v6)

- “Tabernacle” — Jn 1:14 ... “dwelt” = “tabernacled”
Entire ... Psalm 91
Neither “heat” nor “rain”
but “the cool of the day” (Gen 3:8)
Air-conditioned
Circumstance-conditioned
etc!

Isaiah Chapter 5

Reasons for Fruitlessness

Compare —

	<u>John 15</u>		<u>Isaiah 5</u>	
v1	I am the true vine	—	Jesus, tribe of Judah	v7
v2	No fruit, pluck away	—	Break up	v5
v3	The Word	—	The Law, the Word	v24
v7				
v5	Without Me, you can do nothing	—	Own wisdom Own might	v21 v22
v11	Joy of the Lord	—	Revellings	vv11,12
v13	Love and Life-laying	—	No righteous judgment Covetousness	v7 v8
v15	I have made all “known” to you	—	No knowledge	v13
v16	Promises, Divine	—	Mockery & challenge	v19
v25	They hated Me without a cause	—	What else can I do?	vv3,4

Six “woes”

Six Reasons for Fruitlessness: (Mt 3:10)

- (1) Material-mindedness and Covetousness (v8)
Mt 13:22 ... *Chokes the Word*
Col 3:5 (Seriousness) ... *idolatry*

- (2) Lack of rejoicing in the Lord and Praising Him
(vv11-13)

Psa 19:1 compare vv8,10
Gen 1:31 ... *everything good*
Psa 98:1; 78:11,12; 118:23,24

Lack of praise (2 Cor 4:15); no abounding of grace

- (3) Postponing the thought of Second Coming &
Consummation (vv18,19)

Mt 24:48-51 ... *My Master is delaying*
His coming

- (4) Lack of truthfulness and right judgment (v20)

Jn 8:44/Gen 3:3-5 ... Satan a liar
Mt 5:37; Isa 5:12 ... *Yes be Yes, No be No!*

- (5) Self-reliance, natural wisdom (v21)

Prov 3:7 ... *Do not be wise in your own eyes*
Rom 12:16 ... *Do not be wise in your own*
opinion

- (6) Disobedience to the Word (v24)

Psa 1:2,3

Six Helps for fruitfulness —

1. He fenced = Protection (Job 1:10)
2. He cleaned up = Purification (Jn 15:3)

- 3. He planted = Plantation (Psa 92:13)
 - 4. He built a tower = Prevention
 - 5. He made a vinepress = Purpose (Production)
 “Sufferings” (Job 23:8-10)
 A beautiful picture of a
 vinepress
 - 6. He looked = Presence (Psa 46:4,5)
-
-
-
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-

Isaiah Chapter 6

Isaiah’s 3-dimensional experience

The Triplets

- Vision of the Lord
 Fire from the Lord
 Voice of the Lord
- Six wings of seraphims
 - 2 for face The
 - 2 for feet exposed
 - 2 for flying parts!
- The thrice-holy God Also,
 - Holy — Past *Holy Father* (Jn 17:11)
 - Holy — Present *Holy Child* (Acts 4:30)
 - Holy — Future *Holy Spirit* (Lk 11:13)
- The Door moved!
 The House filled with smoke!
 The Earth full of His glory!
- 3-fold confession —
 - I am undone!*
 - I am a man of unclean lips!*
 - I dwell among people of unclean lips!*
- Three one-syllable words —
 - WOE!* — word of confession
 - LO!* — word of cleansing
 - GO!* — word of commission

- 3 organs (Isa 6:10) —

Heart

Ears

Eyes

- Three questions —

Whom shall I send? (v8a)

— The Sender

Who will go for Us? (v8b)

— The Messenger

How long? (v11)

— The People (Hearers)

“In the year when King Uzziah died ...” (v1)

Compare 2 Chronicles 26 & Isaiah 6

(26:16) Self-exaltation — *“The Lord lifted up”*
(6:1)

(26:16) Defiling the temple — Robe of God filling the
temple (6:1)

(26:18) Not consecrated — Holy, Holy, Holy (6:3)

(26:19) Leprous from forehead — Seraphims covering the
face, ... (6:2)

(26:16) A censer in his hand — Smoke filling the house
(6:4)

(26:19) Wrath at correction — Trembling & Confession
(6:5)

(26:20) Smiting with leprosy — Sanctifying with fire
(6:6)

(26:21) Cut off! — Commissioned! (6:8,9)

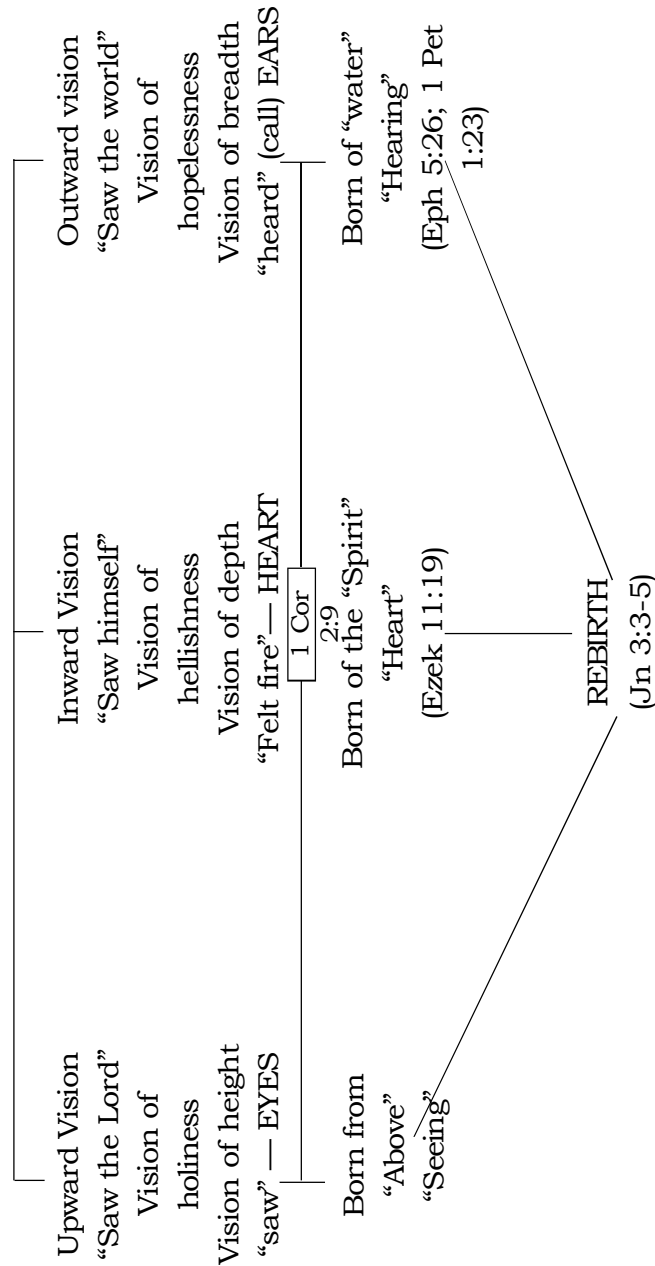
Sins of Uzziah — 1) Self-exaltation

2) Transgression (Word)

3) Wrath at correction

(See next page)

We need Isaiah's 3-dimensional experience —



By cooperating with the devil, we become blind, dull and deaf (2 Cor 4:4).

Isaiah Chapter 7

3-fold Blessing because of Immanuel

The duplets in this Chapter —

- Two Kings — Rezin + Pekah (v1)
(Syria) (Israel)
i.e. Two tails (v4)
- Sign — from depth (sheol) (v11)
or height (Heaven)
- Wearying "men" of God
and "God" (v13)
- Two sides of godliness (v15)
Hate evil | (Heb1:9)
Choose good
- Butter + Honey (vv15,22)
(milk)
— Promised Land (milk + honey)
— God's Word (like milk and honey)
- House of David (twice) (vv2,13)
Mentioned first time in the book of Isaiah
- Fly ... Bee (v18)
↑ ↑
"Egypt" "Assyria" Troublesome creatures
Two Invaders Destructive nature

3-fold message of the Prophet —

- “Because of IMMANUEL!”
- (1) Fear Not! (Ex 14:13,14)
(v4) (2 Chr 20:1,3,14-22)
 - (2) Believe! (Heb Ch 11)
(v9) 11:30 — “after” seven days.
↑
Consistent trust ...!
(See Joshua 6)
Be feeding on the Word (Rom 10:17)
 - (3) Ask! (1 Jn 3:19-23)
(v11) Ahaz was afraid to ask because
of his unfaithfulness.

These 3 messages were prominent in all the teachings of Jesus —

- eg) John 14
- v1a → (1)
 - vv1b,10,11,12 → (2)
 - vv13,14 → (3)

Isaiah Chapter 8

Immanuel is the Rock!

(vv1-15) — About “Immanuel” (v8c)
(vv16-22) — About the “Word of God” (v20)

- Immanuel presented as the “ROCK”
(vv8,10,14)
Type of Christ

The Blessings

- (1) Fruitfulness — Joseph — God the Centre
(Purposefulness) “The Rock”
(Gen 49:22-26)

Joseph is a type of Christ.

- (2) Satisfying all our longings in the wilderness world
The Rock (Ex 17:6; 1 Cor 10:4; Jn 4:10,13,14)
Israel, Samaritan woman

- (3) Safety/Victory — Enemies, powers of darkness
Dt 32:30,31 Nature
Heb 2:14,15 Demons (Mt 16:18)
Dan 2:34,44 Death, etc.

- (4) Salvation and its joy (Psa 118:21-25; Isa 12:2,3)

- (5) Rest and refreshing in life’s problems
Isa 32:1,2
Mt 11:28-30

(6) Sustaining grace from beginning to end
“till the Temple is completed”

Zech 4:6-10

1 Pet 2:4,5

- Results of rejecting the Word —

The Son and the Word (Jn 1:1)

The Rock and the Word

(Mt 7:24-27/1 Pet 2:1-3; 6-8)

(Isa 8:20-22)

1. Darkness — no light
2. Problems and hardship
3. Hunger and poverty
4. Despair and blasphemy (Rev 16:11,21)
5. Helplessness — from Above and Below

Isaiah Chapter 9

Fivefold Name of Immanuel

vv1-7 — Prophecy concerning the birth
and ministry of “Immanuel”

vv8-21 — Judgment and punishment for sins
and disobedience

The 5-fold Name of Immanuel (7:14/9:6)

□ In our progressive life:

Wonderful — Salvation the greatest miracle

Counsellor — Guidance for the new life

Mighty God — Victory and Protection — Evil

Everlasting Father — Provision & Unfailing Care

Prince of Peace — Peace now & ever — Kingdom

□ In our prayer life:

... The Lord’s Prayer Mt 6:9-13

Our Father ... in Heaven — “Everlasting Father”

Your Kingdom ... Lead us not —

... *Deliver us from evil* — “Mighty God”

Your will ... — “Counsellor”

Give us this day ... — “Wonderful”

(miracle provision for Israel)

First miracle — Cana!

Forgive us as we forgive ... — “Prince of Peace”

□ In our professing life:

He alone does wonders — *Wonderful*
(Psa 136:4; 77:14)

He is our wisdom — *Counsellor*
(1 Cor 1:30,31)

He is our strength — *Mighty God*
(1 Sam 15:29; Psa 27:1; Hab 3:19)

He is our Father — *Everlasting Father*
(Jn 20:17)

He is our peace — *Prince of Peace*
(Eph 2:14)

□ In our practical life:

For all this His anger not turned away... etc. ...
5 times in Isaiah

(5:24,25) — Despising God's Word (*Counsellor*)

(9:9-12) — Pride and stoutness of heart
We will! (*Mighty God*)

(9:13-17) — Seeking not the God of miracles,
but misleading prophets.
(Dt 26:5-8) (*Wonderful*)

(9:18-21) — Brother against brother
(*Prince of Peace*)

(10:1-4) — Afflicting the fatherless ...
(*Everlasting Father*)

Isaiah Chapter 10

God's judgment on Pride

This chapter speaks essentially of God's judgment
against PRIDE —

Pride over God's accomplishment through us.

Story

Assyrian is used of the Lord (v5) to punish the
people of God as they went astray (v6). But Assyrian's
heart is lifted up with pride (v7). He exalts himself
(vv13,14). Therefore the Lord is challenging his
proud heart with questions in v15 —

"axe ... saw ... rod ... staff?"

Similar passages in the Scripture:

Isa 29:16 ... *We will flee on horses*

45:9,10 ... *Woe to him who strives*

with His Master

Rom 9:16-24 ... *Who are you to reply*

against God

Examples of those who questioned/counselled God

(1) Adam — Mistaking His Creation

(Gen 3:12)

"YOU gave her ...

She gave me ...

I ate!"

To justify ourselves before God.

- (2) Jonah — Mistaking His Commission
(Jonah 4:1-3,8)

To maintain our prestige.
(The book ends with a question
by God, not answered by man!)

- (3) Peter — Mistaking His commendation
(Mt 16:15-23)

Christ promised the keys of Heaven to Peter.
Now he uses it on Jesus Himself!
Counselling God ... Isa 40:13
... Rom 11:34,35

To avoid difficult paths. (The Cross)

Examples of right attitude

- (1) Abraham
I am dust and ashes ... dared to speak to You
(Gen 18:27-32)
- (2) David
He remembers that we are dust (Psa 103:14-16)
We are clay, You are our Potter (Isa 64:8)
- (3) Paul
We are not sufficient of ourselves (2 Cor 3:5)
-
-
-

Isaiah Chapter 11

7-fold blessing of the Spirit's anointing

Promise of the First advent (vv1,2)
and the Second Advent (vv3-16)

↑
“Millennium”

The 7-fold Blessing of the Spirit's Anointing (vv1,2) —

1. *Spirit of the LORD* (Jn 15:26)
— “The Source”

Bringing God within us —

OT days — God “among” us

NT days — God “with” us

Now — God “in” us

2. *Spirit of WISDOM* (1 Cor 12:8/Acts 6:3,10)
3. *Spirit of UNDERSTANDING* (1 Cor 2:9-12; 1 Jn2:27)
4. *Spirit of COUNSEL* (Rom 8:14/Acts 15:28,29)
5. *Spirit of MIGHT* (Lk 24:49/Acts 1:8)
6. *Spirit of KNOWLEDGE* (1 Cor 12:8; 2:13)

Knowledge — Collection of Truth

Understanding — Digestion of Truth

Wisdom — Application of Truth

7. *Spirit of the FEAR OF THE LORD* (Prov 8:13)
His enablement for Holiness (Rom 7:18,19/8:2)

Isaiah Chapter 12

The Name of God

- One of the two smallest chapters in Isaiah.
(The other one is Chapter 4)
- vv1-3 — Personal experience ... “I” “Me” “My” etc.
vv4-6 — Public call/ministry ... “you” “Israel” etc.
- v2 “Lord Jehovah”

A brief study of the Name of God

Two principal names —

- 1) “*Elohim*” — The Name of His Sovereignty,
(Heb) Rule, Power, etc.,
as CREATOR
The Almighty
Gen 1 ... Power! “GOD”
- 2) “*Jehovah*” — The Name of His Covenant,
(Heb) as the REDEEMER
The Existing (True, Dependable, etc.)
Gen 2 & 3 ... Character!
“LORD” (all caps in the Bible text)
- 3) “*Adonai*” — Again a Name of personal relationship
(Heb) (authority + love)
“*Kurios*” = The most familiar Name used
(Gr) by the Jews

This chapter explains the all-sufficiency of God as expressed in His Compound Names: (See next page.)

Compound names of Jehovah in Isaiah 12

The Foundation	The Way	The Goal
1. <i>Jehovah-Jireh</i> (Gen 22:14) Sacrifice, atonement for <u>salvation</u> (Isa 12:2)	2. <i>Jehovah-Rapha</i> (Ex 15:26) — Healing <u>Strength</u> (Isa 12:2) (cf. Psa 105:37) 3. <i>Jehovah-Shalom</i> (Judg 6:24) — Peace, anger, comfort (Isa 12:1) Trust, no fear (v2a) 4. <i>Jehovah-Raah</i> (Psa 23:1) — Shepherding, wells (Isa 12:3) 5. <i>Jehovah-Zidkenu</i> (Jer 23:6) — Righteousness Holy One (Isa 12:6). On this way, to fight the battles, He is 6. <i>Jehovah-Nissi</i> (Ex 17:15) — Victory song (Isa 12:2), Excellent, Great (vv5,6)	7. <i>Jehovah-Shammah</i> (Ezek 48:35) His being with us. Ultimate (Rev 21:3) “in the midst of you” (Isa 12:6) Therefore (vv1,2) — + Praise Him + Trust Him + Draw from Him “ <i>Hallel-u-jah</i> ” (“ <i>Jah</i> ” = Contraction of “Jehovah”)

Isaiah Chapter 13

The Day of the Lord

Introduction

- Isa 7-12 — Judgments upon Israel and Judah by Assyria

Isa 13-23 — Judgments upon various nations like Babylon (13:1), Moab (15:1), Damascus (17:1), Egypt (19:1), etc.

Babylon (v1)

The beginning (Babel)

Read Gen 10:6-10/9:22-25

The end —

Rev 17:3-5; 18:2,3,20,21

Comparison with Sodom & Gomorrah (Isa 13:19)

1. The extent of sin (Gen 18:20,21/Rev 18:5)
2. The nature of sins (Gen 19:5/Rev 18:2,3)
3. God's people asked to vacate before destruction (Gen 19:12,13/Rev 18:4)

“Beauty of Chaldees excellency”

↑

— Abraham came out of this place! (Gen 11:31)

Time of judgment —

- (1) Before the “Day of the Lord”
By Medes (vv17,18)
Fulfilled in past history

- (2) On the “Day of the Lord” (vv6,9)

↑
i.e. at the Second Coming of Christ with His saints and events to follow (Jude 14,15).

To fight with the Ruler of Babylon, even the Antichrist.

How to prepare for the Second Coming

Maranatha = The Lord comes! (1 Cor 16:22)
(The word of personal greetings)

- (1) Sanctification (1 Jn 3:1-3;
2 Pet 3:11-14)

- (2) Devotional life (Prayer, etc.)
(Lk 21:36)

(Jesus — Mk 1:35/6:46/Lk 6:12)

- (3) Evangelisation (Occupation)
Mt 24:46

Compare with Isa 13:3

- (1) Sanctified — Purity
- (2) Strengthened — Prayer, etc.
- (3) Rejoicing in His Highness — Proclamation (cf. 12:6)

Isaiah Chapter 14

Heaven and Hell

- REST from God (v3)
 - + From Sorrow (Gen 3:16,17)
 - + From Fear (Gen 3:10)
 - + From Bondage (Gen 3:23,24/1:26) (Jn 8:34-36)
Driven away from the garden of freedom
and man's dominion.

Jesus' promise (Mt 11:28-30)

"Sorrow" — *"labour"*

"Fear" — *"I am meek and lowly"*

"Bondage" — *"yoke, burden, heavy-laden"* etc.
- HELL (Isa 14:9)

The words so translated =

Hebrew :	<i>"Sheol"</i>	The unseen world of the
Greek :	<i>"Hades"</i>	departed spirits

↑

The two compartments of this world:

 - (1) The compartment of the Righteous
 - (2) The compartment of the Unrighteous

(1) Called *"Abraham's bosom"* (Lk 16:22)
"Paradise" (Lk 23:43)
Not Heaven (Jn 20:17)

□ All the righteous before the resurrection of Christ
were there. Christ was there temporarily (Psa 16:10).

He has the keys of hades and death (Rev 1:18)
He released the righteous captives (Eph 4:8-10)
Now no righteous there (Heb 12:22-24)

- (2)** Called a *"place of torment"*
(Lk 16:23,24,28)
(Dt 32:22)

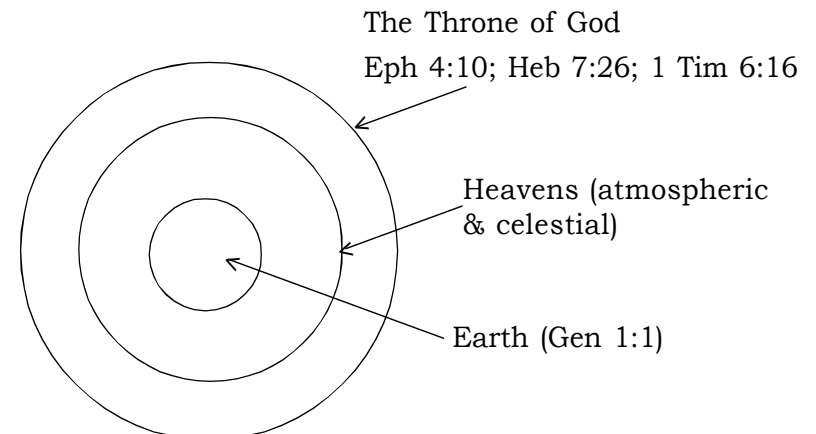
All the unrighteous from the beginning to the
end are here.

The end (Rev 20:14,15)

Between (1) & (2), no inter-travel,
but inter-communication (?)
(Lk 16:26)

Today, the NT saints go not into Sheol but directly to
Heaven (2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:23; Heb 12:23; Rev 6:9,10)

- HEAVEN (Isa 14:12)



- SATAN'S FALL (Isa 14:12-15)

“Lucifer” (Latin) = “light-bearer”
“daystar”

Another reference (Ezek 28:12-15,17)

Before the fall, he was one of the special princes in the Heavens.	Don't go too deep
After the fall, he is called <i>Shatan</i> (Hebrew), meaning the enemy of God	into this! (Dt 29:29)

Devil ... = (Greek) *Diabolos* = Accuser
(Rev 12:10)

Isaiah Chapters 15 & 16

Process of Purification

- Denunciation of God's wrath stern and severe against Moab by Isaiah.

But at the same time he had a sobbing heart —

15:5 ... *My heart will cry out* ...

16:9,11 ... *I'll drench you with tears* ...

Similarly, Paul —Rom 2:12 compare Rom 9:1-3
Gal 5:21 10:1

Jesus —Mt 7:19 compare Lk 19:41
13:40-42

Bad example —

Jonah (4:1,2,10,11)

- We read about Moab in Jeremiah 48 also.

Reason for its judgment: PRIDE

Isa 16:6 ... *haughtiness, wrath, lies*

Jer 48:29-30 ... *loftiness, arrogance*

Reason for this pride Jer 48:11 ...

Not emptied from vessel to vessel

I studied a message on this truth in 1967 but didn't understand it then. However I was keeping the cutting safe till today (14 Oct 1979). I was reminded to read that today and here I share those truths. Very precious lessons —

Process of purification of wine —

Wine = ourselves

Vessels = trials, unexplainable leadings,
tests in healing, etc.

Lees = sediments, impurities.

Old taste = no refinement. Only natural characters.

But Israel experienced this process always
(Heb 12:7,8)

Types of vessels

(1) Coloured glass vessel

— Vessel of misunderstanding

Assuming the colour of the container,
hence misunderstood by the onlookers.

Reaction: Effort to explain the true colour —
Delays settlement and transfer to the next vessel.

Sediments: Self-justification
Self-life

(2) Large flat vessel

— Vessel of public gaze

Experience: Public humiliation
Weakness
Public criticism
Remarks, etc.

Sediments: Pride
Self-preservation

(3) Tall and Narrow Clay Vessel

— Vessel of long, dark trial

God lets us to be alone to prove us in
shadow and darkness (Isa 50:10)

Sediments: Impatience
Questioning attitude
Unbelief

(4) Vessel of odd and bent shape

— Vessel of strange guidance

God's ways not our ways.
We do not have to know
why God does anything
Death to curiosity, reasonings of the flesh.
Sediments: Distrust
Fear

(5) Vessel made with variety of material

— Vessel of everybody-else's fault

i.e. we are called to suffer for others' mistakes
and faults. Very difficult.
eg) A saint — Baby thrown into his house by an
adulteress!

Our possible reactions to vessel-to-vessel transfer —

(1) Spirit not broken

No yielding (Psa 51:17)
Sediments not settled but carried alongwith.

(2) Yielding with resentment

Just enduring it, but not happily.

We say, “Lord, You should not have let this happen to me!”

(3) Delightful obedience

“I delight to do Your will” (Psa 40:7,8)

— Jesus

eg) Cup in the Garden of Gethsemane

i) brokenness (2 Cor 13:4)

The *mighty* God crucified

through *weakness!*

ii) willingness (Heb 10:5-7)

Isaiah Chapter 17

The Rock of our Strength

“Because you have not been mindful of the Rock of your strength ...” (v10)

Our attitude and action concerning the ROCK

— God of the OT

— Christ of the NT

is the decisive factor of our destiny.

e.g.) Moses and the Rock (Num 20:7-12)

Practical aspects as to how this ROCK should affect us —

(1) Dt 32:4 — Righteousness,
Sanctification,
Truthfulness, etc.

+ The Law given on the mountain (Ex 19:23; 20:1)

+ Hab 1:12,13 ... *O Rock! Mighty One!*

Holy One ... Purer eyes ...

(2) Dt 32:15 — No self-reliance

No boasting

+ Isa 26:1-4 ... Everlasting Strength =

Rock of Ages ... Absolute trust

+ Isa 17:9 — Strong cities “we” have built.

Not to depend on them!

Christ: *“Even a small thing, you cannot do”*

(Jn 15:5)

- (3) Dt 32:18-21 — No unholy alliance
 Separation demanded
- + v20, “sons” ... “daughters” (2 Cor 6:14-18)
 - + Num 23:9 — *Dwell alone ... hills ...*
- (4) Dt 32:30,31 — Victory over the Enemy
 (2 Sam 22:2,32,47 / Psa 18:2,31,46)
- + Mt 16:18 — *Gates of hell shall not prevail.*
- (5) Isa 30:29 — No sorrow, but song, joy, etc.
- + Psa 40:2,3 — “Rock” ‘n’ “Roll”
- (6) Isa 44:5,8 — Witnessing without fear!
- + Mt 5:14 — City on the Rock
 - + Apostles — Rom 9:33
 1 Pet 2:8-9 ... *Rock of offence*
- (7) Isa 48:21 — Satisfying waters
- + 1 Cor 10:4
 This ROCK “follows” us!
 Similar to Psa 23:6 ...
Goodness and mercy shall follow me.
-
-
-

Isaiah Chapter 18

Divine quietness and Human bustle

A comparison of

Divine calm and quietness (v4)
 with
 human bustle, hurry and excitement (vv1,2)
wings, ambassadors, vessels, swift messengers, etc.

Such a “quiet and calm” God

gets the final victory and glory! (v7)

Look at v4

The Lord said:

“I will take My rest,

I will look from My dwelling place

a) *like a clear heat in sunshine,*

b) *like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.”*

Heat ... if the situation is cold!

Coolness ... if the situation is hot!

Examples from the life of Christ

(1) Early life before public ministry

Public ministry at 30 only (Lk 3:23)

Patience for GROWTH (Lk 2:52)

No novice (1 Tim 3:4-7)

↑

Compare ... looking after the home (Jesus, Lk 2:51)

(2) First miracle — Wedding at Cana

(Jn 2:3,4) A number of lessons in John's Gospel

Patience for DIVINE GUIDANCE (vv5-8)

To know what is to be done and how.

(3) The Feast of tabernacles

(Jn 7:1-14)

Refusal to go at the beginning itself ... (vv6,8,14)

Patience for DIVINE EXALTATION (vv3,4,10)

Under God's mighty hand ... exalt ... due time ...

(1 Pet 5:4-6)

(4) Woman caught up in adultery (Jn 8)

No immediate reply (vv6-8)

Patience for DISCERNMENT

— whether to rebuke or rehabilitate

No judgment before time (1 Cor 4:4,5)

(5) Raising of Lazarus (Jn 11)

No immediate visit (vv5,6)

Contrast between these two verses.

(No filial motivation)

No immediate entrance even after reaching
the village (v30)

Patience for GOD'S GLORY (v4)

How?

Next chapter (Ch 12)

a) Alabaster box (vv1-10)

(Fragrance)

b) Hosannah (vv11-19)

c) Voice from Above (vv28-30)

(6) Command to wait for Pentecost

(Acts 1:4,5)

Patience for GOD'S PROMISES (Heb 10:36)

(Failure — eg. Abraham)

Conclusion

“Be a companion for the

PATIENCE OF JESUS”

(Rev 1:9)

Isaiah Chapter 19

God is impartial!

- The central truth —
“GOD IS IMPARTIAL”
No favoritism with Him (v25)
Egypt — Formerly a house of bondage
“Before Law” (Egyptian bondage)
Assyria — Formerly an unjust invader
“After Law” (Assyrian captivity)
God’s impartiality —
Rom 10:11-13 ... *No distinction ... same Lord*
:19-21 ... *Israel ... Gentiles*
The hesitation of senior Apostles to accept Paul —
Acts 9:26
- Conversion of Egypt — A life of blessing
 - (1) Speaking the *language of Canaan* (v18)
i.e. the Hebrew language
“*Shibboleth*” (Judg 12:5,6)
Tongue vs. Religion (Js 3:2)
 - (2) Worship and Witness (vv19,20a)
altar ... pillar ... witness ... Saviour ...
(Acts 2:46,47)
 - (3) Life abundant in Christ (vv20b,21)
+ Victorious living (1 Jn 4:4)

- + Communion with Him
To know Him ... To make Him known
(Phil 3:8-11)
- + Life of Commitment and Sacrifice
(Psa 76:11)
- (4) Chastening for Sanctification (v22)
strike ... heal ... return ...
Chastisement (Heb 12:5-11)
- (5) Reconciliation with enemies
(Egypt with Assyria)
Fellowship with God’s people (i.e. with Israel)
Because same LORD (vv23,24)
 - + Pilate & Herod (Lk 23:12)
 - + Israel & Gentiles (Rom 11:12,32,33)

Isaiah Chapter 20

“My Servant”

“Like as My Servant as a sign and wonder” (v3)

In the OT God’s Servants were signs and wonders —

Isa 20:3 ... *Isaiah ... sign and wonder*

8:18 ... *Isaiah and children*

Zech 3:8 ... *Joshua and companions*

In the NT, God’s Servants are witnesses —

Acts 1:8 ... *Holy Spirit ... witnesses*

2:32 ... *God raised Jesus ... witnesses*

3:15 ... *God raised Jesus ... witnesses*

5:32 ... *Holy Spirit and us ... witnesses*

10:39 ... *Witnesses ... death ... resurrection*

Let’s study the “MY SERVANT” characteristics from
7 characters in the OT —

- (1)** Gen 26:24 — *Abraham My servant*
First occurrence of “*My Servant*”
Faith and implicit obedience
(Heb 11:8)

- (2)** Num 12:7 — *My servant Moses*
Faithfulness and closeness
(Num 12:7,8)
... in all matters

- (3)** Num 14:24 — *My servant Caleb*
“Another spirit, faithful following”
Possessing the possessions
(Num 14:6-9)

Study of the Scriptures = Spying of the land

- (4)** Job 1:8 — *My servant Job*
*“Fearing God and Eschewing ...
Evil ...”*
(Compare Heb 1:9)
Right words about God
Job 42:7

- (5)** Isa 20:2,3 — *My servant Isaiah*
Readiness to do the ununder-
standable things

- (6)** Hagg 2:23 — *Zerubbabel My servant*
Anointing ... Zech 4:6
Righteousness ... *Plummet* (Zech 4:10)

- (7)** Isa 52:13 — *My Servant Jesus*
Prudence (v14) suffering, meekness
Mt 12:18-20
Compare 2 Tim 2:24

Isaiah Chapter 21

Ministry of a Watchman

- Oft-repeated words in this Chapter —

“watch ... watchtower ... watchman”

(vv5,6,8,11,12)

Under Chapter 20,

we studied that every Witness should be acknowledged by God as *“My Servant.”*

Here,

we find that every Witness should be a “Watchman.”

- Three-fold ministry of a watchman —

(1) Prayer

Mk 13:33 ... *Watch and pray*

Eph 6:18 ... *Praying always ... watchful*

Col 4:2 ... *prayer ... being vigilant in it*

Prov 8:34 ... (Meditation, etc.) ... *listening*

... watching daily at My gates

(2) Protection

Ezek 3:17

Ezek 33:7 ... *warning God’s people*

Jer 31:6

Heb 13:17 ... *they watch out for your souls*

(3) Proclamation

Isa 52:7,8 ... *brings good news ... sings*

Isa 62:6 ... *day and night ... make mention*

- Enemies of a watchman — (Isa 56:10-12)

(As against the life of Paul)

(1) Slothfulness (Sleepiness, etc.)

Isa 56:10 ... *dumb dogs ... sleeping*

Paul: Acts 20:31,34 ... *three years ...*

day and night

(2) Selfishness

Isa 56:11 ... *greedy dogs*

Paul: Acts 20:33 ... *coveted no one’s silver*

or gold

(3) Sensuality

Isa 56:12 ... *wine ... intoxicating drink*

Paul: 1 Thess 2:10 ... *devoutly ... justly ...*

blamelessly

Isaiah Chapter 22

The need for Tears

- vv12-14 ... *The Lord God called for weeping*
but instead, joy ... eating ...
drinking ... this is iniquity
- A time for everything
(Eccl 3:1,4)
A time to weep (and then) a time to laugh ...
A time to mourn (and then) a time to dance ...

The order in v2 is changed here.

The reason for our lack of joy and gladness is
that we have not wept enough!
- We need tears in
 - 1) Personal life
 - 2) Ministerial life

(1) Personal life

2 Cor 7:9-11,13 ... *sorrow ... diligence ...*
fear ... zeal

This refers to repentance after rebirth.

The Corinthians were believers
when Paul wrote to them.

Prov 28:13,14

Happy is the man who fears always.

Psa 51 — *iniquity ... transgressions ... my ...*
sins ... evil

Psa 52 — Confessions of victory and authority
on the grace David experienced (vv1,8)
Then, praying for *joy and singing* (51:8,12,14)

Sermon on the mount — (Mt 5:4)
Blessed are those who mourn;
they shall be comforted.

In Prophecy — Isa 61:2,3
mourn ... comfort ... ashes ... beauty ...
heaviness ... praise

(2) Ministerial life

Isaiah's testimony (Isa 22:4)
I will weep for my people

Call by Jeremiah (Lam 2:18,19)
tears ... cry ... heart ... hands ...
for young children

Call by Joel (Joel 2:17) — then joy v21
priests ... weep ... for God's people
Then joy (v21)

Example of Christ (Heb 5:7,8)
prayers ... cries ... tears ...

Example of Paul (Acts 20:19,31)
Serving God with tears

Conclusion

Rev 7:17 — “God shall wipe away all your tears”

Will you have any tears to be wiped off?!!!

Isaiah Chapter 23

God who is able to abase

The entire chapter speaks of God's anger against cities and nations like Tyre, Tarshish, Cyprus, Sidon, Shihor, Egypt, Canaan, Chaldea and Assyria. He brings down their harvest, economy, strength, strongholds, towers, etc.

v9, *The Lord of hosts will bring to dishonour the pride of all glory*

Typical Examples —

(1) Builders of Babel

Gen 11:1-9

(2) Prophet Eli and his family

1 Sam 2:27-30

Look at the prophetic nature of Hannah's song on this subject (1 Sam 2:1-10)

Talk no more proudly ...

No arrogance from your mouth ...

God brings low and lifts up

(3) King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 4:29-37)

God is able to abase those who walk in pride (v37b)

The Devil is behind all these pride

(Isa 14:12-15; Ezek 28:12-18)

Lucifer ... fallen from heaven ...

He said, I will ... I will ...

I will ... I will ... I will

Finally GOD gets all *glory, honour and power* and

— Rev 5:12,13

The Devil cast down forever! (Rev 20:10)

Isaiah Chapter 24

The End of the World

Because the end of the world is sure and near —

Glorify His Name everywhere (v15)

- Evangelism and the Evil day —

Joel 2:28-32 ...*Great day of the Lord ... sons
and daughters shall prophesy*

Amos 6:1,3,6 ...*day of the Lord ... repentance*

2 Pet 3:9,10 ...*day of doom ... at ease in Zion*

How will folks come to repentance unless there
are *Senders, Goers* and *Preachers*?
(Rom 10:13-15)

- Today (6 April 1980) is Easter Sunday!
The emphasis of Easter is Evangelism —

- + Matthew — 28:10,18-20
- + Mark — 16:15-18
- + Luke — 24:47-49
- + John — 20:17
:21
- + Acts — 1:4-8

Isaiah Chapter 25

Blessings of Relationship with God

This is a chapter of relationship —

“You are MY God” (v1) | Both individual
“Lo, this is OUR God” (v9) | and corporate

First — “MY” God

Final — “OUR” God

eg) Lord’s Prayer

OUR ... Our Father ... our daily bread ... our sins

US ... Give us ... Forgive us ... Lead us not ...
deliver us ...

Emphasis of our Relationship with God
while commanding separation (2 Cor 6:16-18) —
Father ... sons ... daughters

Blessings of this Relationship —

(In the order of Isaiah 9:6)

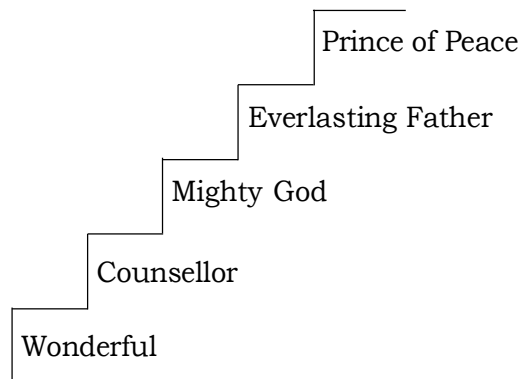
1. *Wonderful* (Isa 25:1)
2. *Counsellor* (v1)
3. *Mighty God* (vv2,3,4,5)
4. *Everlasting Father* (vv6,7,8) — Psa 103:13
5. *Prince of Peace* (vv9,10) (Isa 26:1-3)

- These Blessings through ministries in the Church
(Eph 4:11) —

(1) Wonderful — *Apostles*
(2 Cor 12:12)

- (2) Counsellor — *Teachers*
- (3) Mighty God — *Prophets*
Known for power & strength
(eg. Lk 1:17)
- (4) Everlasting Father — *Pastors*
Fatherly care to the sheep
- (5) Prince of Peace — *Evangelists*
(Rom 10:15)

■ These are the steps in the Christian life also —



Beginning with the “*wonderful*” gift of Salvation and finally reaching the eternal state of peace under the rule of the “*Prince of Peace!*”

Confess this relationship every morning as in Isa 25:1,9 —

“*You are my God!*”
“*This is our God!*”

Isaiah Chapter 26

Other lords

v13, “*O Lord our God, other lords besides You have had dominion over us; but hereafter we will worship Your name only and depend on You.*”

Some of the “other lords” in our life —

- (1) Sinful lusts
Rom 6:12-14 ... *sin ... lusts ... reign... dominion*
:18,19 ... *freed ... slaves of righteousness*
- (2) Earthly-mindedness
Phil 3:18-20 ... *belly ... earthly things ... god*
Col 3:1-3,5 ... *covetousness ... idolatry*
Mt 6:31-34 ... *food... clothes... Kingdom of God*
- (3) Fear of death
Heb 2:14,15 ... *bondage ... release ...*
Mt 10:28-31 ... *body ... soul ...*
- (4) Own achievements
Hos 14:3 ... *work of our hands ... gods*
Dt 8:17,18 ... *my hand ... wealth*
- (5) Senses
We look for something tangible —
eg) Israel — Aaron — Calf (Ex 32:1-6)

We want to walk by sight, not by faith (2 Cor 5:1-9)
But our God is One who hides Himself (Isa 45:15)

If we thrust away these lords and trust only on the Lord God, *He will keep us in perfect peace* (Isa 26:3), and *establish peace for us* (v12)

Isaiah Chapter 27

Promises to God's People

Continuing a Call to God's people —

"Come, my people, enter your chambers ... hide yourself for a little moment, until the indignation (of God) is past"
(26:20)

God's Promises —

(1) Punishment for Satan (27:1)

"The Lord will punish the fleeing serpent"

Reference for future fulfilment (Rev 12:7-10)

Application for today —

"God will crush Satan under your feet shortly"
(Rom 16:20)

- + Give no place to the devil (Eph 4:26,27).
Keep the heart virtuous.
- + Stand against the devil (Eph 6:11; Js 4:7).
- + Cast out the devil (Mt 10:8).

(2) God's care for our fruitfulness (Isa 27:2,3,6)

His purpose in choosing us —

To bring forth abiding fruit (Jn 15:16)

For that He is —

- a) Watching over us
- b) Watering continually
- c) Guarding from hurt (eg. Job 1:10)

(3) Purification by chastisement

God struck Israel ... His rough wind (Isa 27:7-9)

- + Punishment for correction,
not destruction (Heb 12:5-13)
- + Not beyond our ability (1 Cor 10:13)

(4) Gathering to the glorious place of eternal worship

Great trumpet ... worship in the holy mount
(Isa 27:12,13)

Conclusion

These four are progressive blessings through —

(1) Calvary and Resurrection

Forgiven you all trespasses (Col 2:12-15)

(2) Pentecost

Firstfruits of the Spirit (Rom 8:23)

Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22,23)

(3) Dispensation of Grace

Thorn ... My grace ... your weakness
(2 Cor 12:7-9)

(4) Second Coming

Ten thousand times ten thousand ... worship
(Rev 5:11-14)

Isaiah Chapter 28

A Holy Ghost chapter!

This Chapter foreshadows the blessings of the Holy Spirit to New Testament Christians —

(1) Being filled with the Spirit

Wine vs. Holy Spirit

— Wine: *Overcome with wine* (v1)

Drunkards (v3)

Intoxicating drink (v7)

— Spirit: *Crown of glory &*

Diadem of beauty (v5)

Spirit of justice (v6)

See how this is contrasted in the NT —

Eph 5:18, *“Be not drunk with wine,
but be filled with the Spirit”*

An important question to each believer:

“Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”
(Acts 19:2)

An important Commandment:

“Receive the Holy Spirit” (Jn 20:22)

(2) Ministering to one another and to the Lord (Eph 5:19)

Isa 28:9 *...knowledge ... message*

:10 *...precept upon precept*

:11 *...stammering lips ... another tongue*

:12 *...rest ... refreshing*

:13 *...Word of the Lord*

The value of speaking in tongues is presented in 1 Corinthians 14.

(3) Wisdom and Knowledge

Isa 28:26-29,

*“God instructs ... teaches ... wonderful counsel
... excellent guidance”*

Isa 11:2,

“Spirit of wisdom ... counsel ... knowledge”

1 Cor 12:8-10 ... The gift list —

First, *wisdom*

Next, *knowledge*

■ How to embrace the blessings of the Spirit —

(a) Come to God as a child (Isa 28:9)

(b) Mock not the things of God
even if you don't understand them (v22)

Isaiah Chapter 29

Hypocrisy of God's people

v1, *Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt!*

"Ariel" — Another name for Jerusalem

(1) What is hypocrisy?

(a) In life

Worship (v13)

Walk (15)

(b) In doctrine

Truth vs. Traditions

Mt 15:7-9; Mk 7:6,7

(2) Punishment for hypocrisy —

a) *Woe! Heaviness, sorrow* (Isa 29:1,2)

So many *"Woes"* in Matthew 23

b) Spiritual blindness (Isa 29:9-12,14)

spirit of stupor ... deaf ears ...

darkened eyes (Rom 11:8-10)

dull hearts ... closed eyes (Mt 13:10-16)

eg) Nicodemus (Jn 3:10)

Those who crucified Christ had the

Scriptures always with them (1 Cor 2:8).

Similar condition today!

(3) Repentance from hypocrisy —

a) Humility and meekness (Isa 29:19)

eg) Tax-collector in the Temple (Lk 18:9-14)

b) Fear of the Lord and Reverence to His Name

(Isa 29:23)

(4) Blessings of repentance from hypocrisy —

a) Prosperity

Fruitful field ... joy (vv17,19)

b) Clear vision and true understanding

Deaf hear ... blind see ... erred understand

(vv18,24)

Isaiah Chapters 30 & 31

Waiting on the Lord

The entire Chapter focuses on waiting on the Lord.

It's an eternal truth —

30:8, ... *forever and ever*

Whether or not we wait on God, He waits for us (v18)

Meaning of waiting

(1) Taking counsel from the Lord (30:1)

... *not self-devised plans*

+ Listening to God's Word (30:9)
the Lord of the lord (30:9)

+ Listening to God's men (30:10)
seers ... prophets (v10)

(2) Quietness and Cessation from our own works

Egyptians horses (30:7,15,16)

Compare Mt 11:28,30

Your heavy burden ... My easy yoke

(3) Fixed love and devotion to God

Throw away idols (30:22; 31:6,7)

eg) Unable to put up with Moses' delay (Ex 32:1)

Blessings of waiting

(1) Strength

Isa 30:15 ... *In quietness & confidence is strength*

31:8 ... *Assyria shall fall ...*

Compare Isa 40:31 ... *Those who wait on the Lord
shall renew their strength*

(2) Joy (because of answered prayer)

Isa 30:19,29 ... *When He hears it, He will answer*

Compare with Jn 16:24 ... *Ask ... receive ... joy ...*

(3) Guidance & Teaching

Isa 30:20,21 ... *teachers ... Word ... way*

Compare with Psa 16:7-9

(4) Prosperity

Isa 30:23,24 ... *rain ... seed ... bread ... pastures*

Compare Psa 1:2,3

(5) Protection and Deliverance

Isa 31:5 ... *defend ... preserve ...*

Compare with Psa 3:5-8 ... *peaceful sleep ...
enemies struck*

Isaiah Chapter 32

Blessings of Soulwinning

v20, *"Blessed are you who sow beside all waters"*

"Waters" = "people" (Rev 17:15)

Sowing = Proclaiming the Gospel

Blessings of Soulwinning

(1) Psa 126:5,6 Life of great joy. Heaven will share its joy with us! (Lk 15:7,10)
Angels will talk about us when we win a soul!

(2) Prov 11:26 Those who are won by us will thank God for us and hence an extra-supply of grace to us
(2 Cor 9:10-14)

(3) 1 Thess 2:19,20 The souls won by us will be our crown and joy at Christ's Coming!

(4) Dan 12:3 Soulwinners will shine as stars forever!
Soulwinner is a star!!

"He who wins souls is wise" (Prov 11:30)

Why we do not win souls —

(1) Lack of Passion

"Ease and complacency" (Isa 32:9-11)

Refer: Amos 6:1-6

The ease is due to —

- + Postponement of the evil day (v3)
- + Life of luxury (v4)
- + Life of self-centredness (v6)
- + Overdosing of religion (v5)

Sleeping in harvest causes shame (Prov 10:5)

(2) Lack of Power

Isa 32:15-18, *"Until the Spirit is poured on us from on High..."*

"Tarry until" (Lk 24:49)

Then "go" (Acts 1:8)

Isaiah Chapter 33

God's will for us is always Fullness!

We will begin with a few New Testament references and then analyse Isaiah 33 —

Mk 12:30	First <u>commandment</u> : ALL your heart, ...
Jn 10:10	<u>Life</u> more ABUNDANT ...
Acts 20:27	ALL the <u>counsel</u> of God
Rom 15:19,29	FULLNESS of the Blessing of the <u>Gospel</u>
Col 2:9,10	FULLNESS of Godhead ... <u>complete in Him</u>
1 Thess 3:10	PERFECTING the <u>faith</u>
Tit 1:5	Elders in EVERY city ... for <u>order</u>
Tit 3:6	<u>Holy Spirit</u> poured ABUNDANTLY

Isaiah 33 explains the FULL SALVATION:

v2	... <i>Salvation in trouble</i>
v6	... <i>Strength of Salvation</i>
v22	... <i>The Lord will save us.</i>

Presenting —

(1) A full Godhead (v22)

The Lord	Our Judge	— Holy Spirit (<i>judges the world</i>)
	Our Lawgiver	— Father
	Our King	— Christ

(2) A full manifestation of Godhead —

v2	Gracious Lord	— Jesus
vv5,10	Exalted Lord	— The Father (Isa 6:1)
v21	Glorious Lord	— The Holy Spirit (Like rivers)

(3) Full benefits of Salvation —

v23	Deliverance
v24	Healing
v24	Forgiveness

(4) Full blessings of Salvation —

v16	Heavenly places	Today
v16	Bread + Water	
v17	The Kingdom — Tomorrow	

(5) A full consecration demanded — (v15)

<i>Walk</i>	— Feet
<i>Speak</i>	— Mouth
<i>Despise</i>	— Heart
<i>Shake</i>	— Hands
<i>Hear</i>	— Ears
<i>See</i>	— Eyes

Receivers : Ears, Eyes

Speakers : Heart, Mouth

Doers : Hands, Feet

Isaiah 33 ← easy to remember!

Isaiah Chapter 34

Our God is a God of Pairs!

v16, “Search from the Book of the Lord ...

Not one will be without its mate”

■ Our God is a God of pairs!

1. Heaven / Earth — The Universe (Gen 1:1)
2. Evening / Morning — The Day (Gen 1:5)
3. Sun / Moon — The Lights (Gen 1:16)
4. Man / Woman — Humanity
5. OT / NT — His Book
6. Law / Testimony — His Book (Isa 8:20)
7. Psalms / Proverbs — Relationship with God /
Relationship with man
8. Mary (Mt 1) /
Joseph (Lk 3) — Genealogy
9. Water / Spirit — Baptism (Mk 1:8)
10. Law / Grace — God's Programme (Jn 1:17)
11. I Comforter /
II Comforter — God's Gifts (Jn 14:16)
12. Apostle /
High Priest — Twofold ministry (Heb 3:1)
To people / To God
13. I Coming /
II Coming — Heb 9:28
14. Author / Finisher — Perfection, Completeness

15. Sheep / Goat — Judgment (Mt 25:32,33)

16. Heaven / Hell — Eternity (Mt 25:46)

■ A number of pairs in Isaiah 34 itself —

Nations/World (v1); *Nations/Armies* (v2); *Leaf/Fruit* (v4); *My sword/My curse* (v5); *Sacrifice/Slaughter* (v6); *Wild oxen/Young bulls* (v7); *Day of vengeance/Year of recompense* (v8); *Streams/Land* (v9); *Confusion/Emptiness* (v11); *Nobles/Princes* (v12); *Jackals/Ostriches* (v13); *Snakes/Hawks* (v15); *God's mouth/God's Spirit* (v16).

■ The “mate” for OT in NT —

eg) Life of Christ

1. Seed of a woman (Gen 3:15/Gal 4:4)
2. Throne of David (Isa 9:7/Mt 1:1)
3. Place of birth (Mic 5:2/Mt 2:1)
4. Time of birth (Dan 9:25/Lk 2:1,2)
5. Virgin birth (Isa 7:14/Mt 1:18)
6. Massacre of infants (Jer 31:15/Mt 2:16)
7. Flight into Egypt (Hos 11:1/Mt 2:14)
8. Ministry in Galilee (Isa 9:1,2/Mt 4:12-16)
9. As a Prophet (Dt 18:15/Jn 6:14)
10. As a Priest (Psa 110:4/Heb 6:20)
11. Rejection by Jews (Isa 53:3/Jn 1:11)
12. Triumphal Entry (Zech 9:9/Jn 12:13,14)

13. Betrayal (Psa 41:9/Mk 14:10)
14. Sold! (Zech 11:12/Mt 26:15)
15. Potter's Field (Zech 11:13/Mt 27:6,7)
16. Substitute for Judas (Psa 109:7,8/Acts 1:18-20)
17. False witnesses (Psa 27:12/Mt 26:60,61)
18. Silent when accused (Isa 53:7/Mt 26:62,63)
19. Smitten and spat upon (Isa 50:6/Mk 14:65)
20. Hated without a cause (Psa 69:4/Jn 15:25)
21. Crucified with transgressors (Isa 53:12/Mt 27:38)
22. Hands and Feet pierced (Psa 22:16/Jn 20:27)
23. Mocked and insulted (Psa 22:6-8/Mt 27:39,40)
24. Gall and Vinegar (Psa 69:21/Jn 19:29)
25. Prayed for enemies (Psa 109:4/Lk 23:34)
26. Side was pierced (Zech 12:10/Jn 19:34)
27. Casting lots for coat (Psa 22:18/Mk 15:24)
28. Bone not broken (Psa 34:20/Jn 19:33)
29. Buried with the rich (Isa 53:9/Mt 27:57-60)
30. Resurrection (Psa 16:10/Mt 28:9)
31. Ascension (Psa 68:18/Lk 24:50,51)

We are commanded not just to “*read*” the Book of the Lord but “*search*” and “*read*” (Isa 34:16). Reference Bibles are useful here. Depend on the Holy Spirit to remind references for connecting.

Isaiah Chapter 35

Restoration

This chapter speaks of the Millennium.

i.e. The 1000-year reign of Christ

References: Acts 3:19-21

Times of restoration of all things

Rev 20:1-7

We shall reign with Christ a thousand years.

- Restoration of —
 1. The Earth (the land) Isa 35:1,2
 2. The man (spiritual) :3,4
 3. The man (physical) :5,6
 4. The land (people) of Israel :7,8
 5. The joy (and worship)
 - of God's People — The joy
 - destroyed by the lion-like :9,10
 - devil and ravenous beast!
- We will study each of the above under three heads
 - a) The curse
 - b) The present/partial/conditional fulfilment
 - c) The full and literal restoration

(See the table on the next page.)

ISAIAH 35	ITEMS	THE CURSE	PRESENT/PARTIAL CONDITIONAL FULFILMENT	FULL and LITERAL RESTORATION
vv1,2	Earth	Gen 3:17-19 4:10-12 5:29	Isaac: Gen 26:12 People of Israel: Dt 28:1,2,4,11,12	Rom 8:19-22 Isa 32:15,16,20 Rev 22:1-3
v 3,4	Man (Spiritual)	Gen 3:22-24 4:7	Noah: Gen 7:1 Paul: Rom 7:21-24 8:23a	Rom 8:16-18 Rev 21:22 (Temple is partial), 24a,27 1 Cor 13:9-12 Rev 22:4
vv5,6	Man (Physical)	Gen 3:16,19 4:14	People of Israel: Ex 15:26 Ministry of Christ: Mt 8:16,17 Corinthians: 1 Cor 11:30 Timothy: 1 Tim 5:23; 2 Tim 4:20	Rom 8:23 Rev 21:4 22:2b
vv7,8	Land of Israel (People also)	Lev 26:31-35 :43	Rom 10:1,12,13	Rom 11:12,23, 24 Rev 21:13 (14!)
vv9,10	Joy of God's people (wor- ship, etc.)	Gen 3:24	Prayer for Revival: Psa 85:6 Repentance for Revival: Joel 1:16 2:13,14,23 Disciples: Acts 13:52	Rev 21:22-24

Isaiah Chapter 36

Voices of Challenge

The King of Assyria challenges King Hezekiah with these questions —

- v4, *What confidence is this in which you trust?*
v5, *In whom do you trust, that you rebel against me?*

We come across in the Bible several mocking and malicious challenges against God's people. Here are some of them —

- (1) Pharaoh — Moses & Aaron
"Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?"
(Ex 5:2)

Answer: *"The God of the Hebrews!"* (v3)

Abraham was the first one to be called a "Hebrew" in the Bible (Gen 14:13)

He is known for the "PROMISE" God made to him.

- (2) Job's wife — Job
"Do you still hold to your integrity towards God?"
(Job 2:9)

Answer: *"Shall we accept only good from God and not adversity?"* (v10)

PRAISE and thank God for everything (1:21 also)

- (3) David's friends and foes — David
"All who hate me... Even my own friend ..."
(Psa 41:7-9)

Answer: *“O Lord, be merciful to me ... Blessed be the Lord ... Amen and Amen!”* (vv10-13)

PRAYER and Praise

- (4) Nebuchadnezzar — Three young men
“Who is the God who will deliver you from my hands?”
(Dan 3:15)

Answer: *“Our God whom we serve ... Even if not ...”*
(v16-18)

Proclamation of our POSITION firmly.

- (5) Religious leaders — Jesus
“If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross!” (Mt 27:41-44; Lk 23:35)

Answer: *“Father, into Your hands I command My spirit”* (Lk 23:46)

Commitment with PATIENCE

To summarise ...

How to face challenges —

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| (1) Voice from the Rulers | — PROMISE |
| (2) Voice from the Family | — PRAISE |
| (3) Voice from Friends and Foes | — PRAYER |
| (4) Voice from Boss & Colleagues | — POSITION |
| (5) Voice from the Religion | — PATIENCE |

Isaiah Chapter 37

Prevailing Power of Prayer

v4, *“Lift up your prayer ...”*

v15, *“Hezekiah prayed to the Lord ...”*

v21, *“Thus says the Lord God ... Because you have prayed...”*

Lessons on Prayer in the hour of crisis —

- (1) Turn to the Lord at once.

Do not wait for all other doors to be closed.

Hezekiah went into the House of the Lord immediately
(vv1,14)

King Asa first went to the doctors and not the Lord
(2 Chr 16:12)

The *“fatherless”* ... i.e. no direction to turn to
(Hos 14:3)

A promise: Enemy's flood ... God's banner!
(Isa 59:19)

- (2) Acknowledge God as —

- + Sovereign — The Creator God (Elohim)
“You have made heaven and earth” (Isa 37:16)
- + Saviour — The Covenant God (Jehovah)
“O Lord our God, save us!” (v20)

eg) Early Church —

Acts 4:24 (Creator God)
:25 (Covenant God)

This is positive confession!

(3) Be rightly motivated with a holy vengeance

(Isa 37:4,17,23)

“All may know that You are the Lord God” (v20)

— motive

“Whom have you reproached and blasphemed?” (v23)

— vengeance

eg) David — 1 Sam 17:36,45,46

“Living God ... Name of the Lord”

Elijah — 1 Ki 18:36,37

“God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel”

Christ — Jn 11:41,42

“Father, You always hear Me”

Conclusion

“We wrestle not against men ... Praying always”

(Eph 6:12,18)

Isaiah Chapter 38

The Mystery of Sickness

Lessons from King Hezekiah's sickness —

v1, *“In those days Hezekiah was sick”*

- + Days of dependence on the Lord (37:11,14)
- + Days of good spirit of prayer (37:15-17)
- + Days of good motives (37:20)

■ Is sickness always the immediate result of sin?

- a) Sickness came after sin entered the world; but sin need not be the immediate cause of every sickness for a child of God.

eg) Job — Job 1:1,22
2:7

Epaphroditus — Phil 2:25-30

Timothy — 1 Tim 5:23

The wrong concept of the disciples (Jn 9:1-3)

- b) Sin & Sickness (The other side of the coin)

Sin causes sickness —

Psa 32:3/51:8

1 Cor 11:28-30

Js 5:14-16

■ Does God change His mind by our prayers? (Isa 38:1-5)

First God told Hezekiah that he would die. When he prayed to Him, He said, *“I will add to your days fifteen years.”*

How to explain (Num 23:19)?

“God is not a man to change what He said.”

a) God does not change His good promises —

Num 23:20

Tit 1:2

“God cannot lie.”

Heb 6:17,18

b) God repents of evil judgment,

if there is repentance —

Dt 32:36 ... *The Lord will judge ...*

have compassion

Jer 18:7,8 ... *If the nation repents, I will relent*

26:13 ... *Amend your ways ... God will*

relent

c) God repents of good promises also if conditions are broken —

Jer 18:9-10

eg) Jonah vs. Jeremiah

+ Jonah preached partial truth. He spoke only about judgment (Jonah 3:1-4). Only the King calls for repentance (vv9,10). Look at Jonah's reaction (4:1,2).

+ Jeremiah presents both sides of the truth plainly (Jer 18:7-8,9-10; 26:12,13).

■ Can we ask for signs from God? (Isa 38:22,7)

Another example: Gideon (Judg 6:36-40)

a) This is not a very pleasing thing to the Lord

(Judg 6:39)

Jesus: *“An adulterous and evil generation*

seeks a sign” (Mt 12:38,39)

b) In these days of the Holy Spirit,

we “walk by faith, not by sight”

2 Cor 5:5-7

Rule for our life and prayer —

1 Jn 5:13-15 ... *God's will*

■ What shall we do for all that God has done for us?

Learning from Hezekiah —

a) Soft walk (Isa 38:15)

b) Praise and worship (vv18a,20)

c) Hope and trust (v18b)

Isaiah Chapter 39

Loneliness and Secrets

This chapter cannot be clearly understood without
2 Chronicles 32:31,

“Regarding the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, whom they sent to Hezekiah to inquire about the wonder that was done in the land, God withdrew from him, in order to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart”

The “wonder” referred to here is the “sign” which Hezekiah required of the Lord (Isa 38:7,8)

The sun was a god of Babylon!

“God leaves us alone to try us!”

Examples —

OT — Job

“The Lord said to Satan:

Behold, he is in your hand” (Job 2:6; 3:23)

NT — Jesus ... Wilderness (Mt 4:11)

... Gethsemane (Lk 22:41-43)

... Cross (Mk 15:34)

■ Lessons on keeping secrets —

a) Believe not people too easily.

Many believed ... but Jesus did not commit Himself to them (Jn 2:23-25)

b) Be discrete in sharing precious truths.

Do not throw them before dogs and pigs (Mt 7:6)

c) Reveal not God’s plans too early.

I told no one ... (Neh 2:12)

I had not yet told the Jews (v16)

Share at the right time (2:17,18)

d) Learn to pray secretly (1 Cor 14:2).

The Devil is NOT all-knowing;

only God is Omniscient! (1 Jn 3:20; 4:4)

Isaiah Chapter 40

The Plan of the New Testament

This chapter speaks of the overall plan of the New Testament —

v1, “*comfort ... comfort*” (twice!)

The NT is the story of two Comforters.

(a) Jesus Christ

Birth — “*favour with God*” (Lk 1:30)

— “*good tidings ... great joy*” (2:10)

Beginning of His ministry (5:10)

— “*Fear not*”

Course of His ministry — “*Fear not*” (8:50)

Resurrection — “*Peace to you*” (24:36)


(b) Holy Spirit

Initial outpouring — “*Peace ... Holy Spirit*”
(Jn 20:21,22)

— “*Another Comforter*” (14:16)

How to experience the NT Blessing —

(1) Preparation (Isa 40:3-5/Lk 3:4-6)

Repentance		<i>Exalt</i>	— Lack of fruits (Lk 3:8a)
		<i>Lower</i>	— Religious pride (3:8b)
		<i>Straighten</i>	— Practical life (3:10-14)
		<i>Level up</i>	— Baptism with water & Spirit (3:16,17) (Thorough purging)

(2) Separation (Isa 40:6-11)

v6, “*Cry*” = Call out = Ecclesia

“*Be saved from this perverse generation*”

(Acts 2:38-40)

“*Come out from among them*” — 2 Cor 6:14-18

Compare v16 with Isa 40:9 ... “*I will be their God*”

The Church feeds on the Word (Isa 40:11,8).

Built on the Word (Acts 20:32).

(3) Proclamation (Isa 40:12-21)

vv12-17/21-23 — His absolute authority over all
nations and powers

Compare Mt 28:18-20 and Psalm 2

vv18-21 — His incomparableness.

The vanity of idols ...

Violation of the first two

Commandments (Ex 20:1-6)

The last written NT book —

“*Keep yourselves from idols*” (1 Jn 5:21)

(4) Power for God's people

(Isa 40:28-31)

Present wrestling: Wicked spirits in the heavenlies
(Eph 6:10-18)

Future war: Armies in Heaven against nations
(Rev 19:14-16)

Isaiah Chapter 41

“My choice, My friend, My servant”

In this Chapter, God designates certain individuals —

- + *Israel My servant* (v8)
- + *Jacob My choice* (v8)
- + *Abraham My friend* (v8)
- + *Jacob the worm* (v14)

Let's study each of these in the following order:

(1) Jacob My choice (v8)

Mal 1:2,3 All equally bad,
 but Jacob chosen
 (Rom 3:23)

Rom 9:14-16 Saved by grace only
(Eph 2:8,9)

Illustrate:

- When Dr. Billy Graham was asked, “Why does God use you so much?”, his instant answer: “That’s the first question I would ask God when I go to Heaven. But for now, I know it’s because of the grace of God.”
- Pointing at a drunkard dragged by policemen on the streets, John Wesley said with tearfilled eyes, “There goes John Wesley but for the grace of God!”

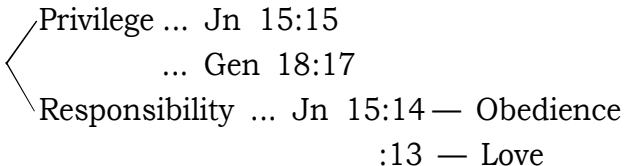
Jn 15:16 ... We have not chosen Him;
 He has chosen us!

Do not boast saying, “I came to Christ ...”
“I repented ...”
“I believed ...”
and so on.

(2) Abraham My friend (Isa 41:8)

Why has God chosen us —

*“That we should know His will, and see the Just One,
and hear the voice of His mouth”* (Acts 22:14)

Friendship 

Two other persons called Friends —

- + Moses (Ex 33:11) ... God communicates
- + Lazarus (Jn 11:11,35,36) ... Jesus loves

(3) Israel My servant (Isa 41:8)

Jacob → Israel — for princely service
(Gen 32:28)

Power with God — Supplication (Rom 15:30)

Power with man — Soulwinning ...

Chosen to proclaim (Acts 9:15)

Fear not! Catch men! (Lk 5:10)

Fear not! Speak! (Acts 18:9,10)

(4) Jacob the worm (Isa 41:14)

Suffering (Psa 22:6-8)

Basic calling of each Christian —

Called to suffer (Phil 1:29)
eg) Paul (Acts 9:16)
“Fear not!” (Rev 2:10)

Conclusion

Message from the “*King of Jacob*” (Isa 41:21)

This is a rare name for God in the Bible!

- (1) Jacob ... Salvation by grace
- (2) Abraham ... Revelation of God
- (3) Israel ... Service for men
- (4) Jacob ... Suffering without fear

God’s repeated assurance —

- + *Fear not, I am with you* (v10)
- + *Fear not, I will help you* (v13)
- + *Fear not, I will help you* (v14)

Isaiah Chapter 42

Christ the model Servant

vv1-12 ... First Advent — Humiliation

vv13-25 ... Second Advent — Glorification

“Behold My Servant” (v1)

The Father God presents His Son as our Example:

- 1 Pet 2:21 ... *Christ ... an example ... His steps*
- Heb 3:1 ... *Consider Christ Jesus*
- Eph 4:15 ... *Grow up into Christ*
- Phil 2:5 ... *Let the mind of Christ be in you*

What to learn from Jesus

(1) Jesus pleased His Father.

- + Isa 42:1, *“My soul delights in Him”*
- + vv18-20,24, Disobedience of God’s people
makes them blind.
- + v21, *Word ... Righteousness ... Etc.*

This is why Jesus got baptized (Mt 3:15-17)

(2) Jesus was meek and lowly.

- + Isa 42:2, *He will not cry out*
- + vv13,14, *He will cry out*

Two sides of a perfect character —

- eg) Mt 21:4 *“Meek”* x *“King”*
- :12-13 He rebukes!
- :14 He heals!
- :18,19 He curses!

This is because

He loved righteousness and hated evil! (Heb 1:9)

“Learn of Him” (Mt 11:28,29)

What? —

- + Meekness is not weakness.
- + Firmness is not stubbornness.
- + Humility is not compromise.

(3) Jesus ministered to the people.

a) Encouragement to the weak and backsliders
(Isa 42:3)

No condemnation (Jn 8:10,11)
Help the weak (Rom 14:1; 15:1-3)
Truth with Grace (Jn 1:17/Isa 42:3b)
Truth in love (Eph 4:15)
Help for repentance (Js 5:19,20)

b) Deliverance to the captives and the sick (Isa 42:6,16)

Jesus’ ministry of doing good (Acts 10:38)
Emphasis in the Commission to the twelve
(Mt 10:7,8)
Praying for the sick should be an integral
part of our prayer life (Js 5:16).

Isaiah Chapter 43

How to be an Effective Witness

v12 ... *“You are My witnesses that I am God”*

- God’s basic calling concerning each of us is that we must be His witnesses —

Acts 1:8 — The departing words of Christ

2:32

3:15 — The early Church

5:32

10:39

1 Tim 6:12 — Paul → Timothy

2 Tim 2:2

- Isaiah 43 gives us certain guidelines on being an effective witness for Christ —

(1) Realise God has completely taken care of your past and cleansed it by Christ’s Blood.

Isa 43:18-28

v18, *“Do not remember the former things,
nor consider the things of old.”*

v25, *“I, even I, am He who blots out your
transgressions for My own sake;
and I will not remember your sins.”*

The must of a clear conscience for witnessing —

Heb 9:14 ... *to serve the living God*

10:19-23 ... *conscience ... confession ... mercy ...*

eg) Paul — 1 Tim 1:13-16 ... *pattern*

(2) Recognise the uniqueness and incomparability of our Lord.

Isa 43:10-15... *My witnesses ... No God before Me*

... No saviour ... Your Redeemer ...

your Holy One ... the Creator ...

eg) SS 5:8-16 ... *My beloved ... chief among ten thousand ... altogether lovely*

Paul's assertiveness in his witness —

Acts 9:22 ... *Jesus is THE Christ!*

18:28 ... *Jesus is THE Christ!*

26:22,23,26 ... *I stand witnessing ...*

being convinced

28:31 ... *Preaching ... teaching ...*

with all confidence

The depth of our conviction decides the effectiveness of our witness.

(3) Rest on God's promises.

a) Promise of protection in the work (Isa 43:2)

"I will be with you ... waters ... rivers ... fire"

Great Commission's promise

Mt 28:19,20 ... *I will be with you till the end*

But He may permit stones after the mission is over!

eg) Jesus

Stephen

b) Promise of prosperity in the work (Isa 43:3-9)

v3 ... *Egypt* — people in bondage
(very difficult to release)

Ethiopia — people of blackness
(very difficult to change)

Seba — people of business
(very difficult to attract)

But expect the unexpected! (v19)

"I will do a new thing ... road and rivers in the desert."

Isaiah Chapter 44

Results of the Spirit's Outpouring

v3, *I will pour water on him who is thirsty ...
I will pour My Spirit ... and My blessing ...*

This is exactly what Jesus said in John 7:37,38.

Conditions: 1. Thirst
2. Realisation of dryness
"Floods on the dry ground"

Results/Outcome:

(1) Blossoming growth and ever-freshness

Isa 44:4 ... spring up like grass

An illustrative picture —

*Ezek 47:1-5 ... temple ... water ... river
:12 ... The resultant growth!
food ... fruit ... medicine*

The freshness of the Spirit-filled life

*Psa 36:8 ... abundantly satisfied ... pleasures
46:4 ... river ... streams ... glad*

The Spirit employs the Scripture for this growth —

*Psa 1:1-3 ... Delight in the Word of God
1 Pet 2:1-3 ... Desire the milk of the Word*

(2) Identification and a sense of belonging in God's family

*Isa 44:5, ... I am the Lord's name of Jacob ...
Israel*

A special ministry of the Holy Spirit —

*Rom 8:15-17 — Spirit's witness
Eph 1:13,14 } — Spirit's seal
4:30 }*

This gives us the boldness to testify for Jesus —

*Acts 1:8 ... Power ... witnesses ...
4:31 ... Spoke the Word with boldness ...
5:32 ... We and the Spirit ... witnesses*

(3) Release in Praise & Worship (v23)

*Isa 44:23 ... Sing ... Shout ... Break forth
Eph 5:18-20 ... Be filled ... singing*

Speaking in Tongues helps this release (Acts 2:26)

1 Cor 14:14-18 ... Pray, sing, bless in the spirit

(4) Restoration and Rebuilding

*Isa 44:26,28 ... inhabited ... built ... raised up
Joel 2:23-25 ... former rain ... latter rain ... restore*

Through gifts and ministries

(1 Cor 12:7-10; Eph 4:11-13)

Today's condition —

*1 Sam 13:19,20 ... No blacksmith in Israel ...
Israelites had to go to Philistines ...*

Worldly systems and methods employed to keep
the Church going!

Only the sharpening files available!
i.e. Bibles, Books, Theology, ... not the MEN!

:22 ... Leaders had swords and spears
but people didn't.

People not equipped — Everything Clergy-centered!
But Eph 4:12 ... *For the equipping of the saints!*

Isaiah Chapter 45

Righteousness & Strength in the Lord

v24 — “Only in the Lord are righteousness and strength”
(NASB)

- This is the FACT that will cause all knees
and mouths to come to Him
In the Lord ... to Him (vv22-24)

There will arise big political powers — but there
will be no righteousness.

But Christ will be both —

LAMB (Righteousness) — <i>Saviour</i>	(v21)
LION (Strength) — Lord	

This is what Millennium will be —

Isa 11:4 ...*Righteousness ... Rod*

45:8 ...*Righteousness ... Salvation*

- We are to cooperate with God towards this His good
pleasure like Cyrus (44:28a)

What the world is to witness tomorrow,
the Church is to experience today.

Our Responsibilities in this Programme

- (1)** Unquestioning surrender and submission

Do not strive or question (Isa 45:9,10)

A similar passage — Phil 2:9-11 ... *knees to bow*
... *mouths to confess*

Therefore, “Obey” (v12)
“Tremble” (v12)
“Murmur not” (vv15,16)

(2) A life of Partnership with God

a) “Ask Me” — What you know not! (Isa 45:11)

- God hides Himself! (v15)
i.e. natural senses cannot perceive Him.

The Temple had three areas:

Outer court, Inner court, Innermost court.

There was sunlight in the Outer court,

Candle light in the Inner court or Holy Place,

but no light in the Innermost court or the Holy of Holies.

These are comparable to body, soul and spirit.

We can walk only by faith, not sight (2 Cor 5:7)

At the same time, God leaves us not in darkness
and He speaks not in vain (Isa 45:19)

b) “Act” (Isa 45:1)

Subdue ... loose ... open (v1)

Gates of Hell shall not prevail (Mt 16:18)

Early Church — Acts 4:24-31

The place was shaken as a token of
places to be taken!

We are to bring people out (Isa 45:13).

And there will be a great rejoicing (v25).

Isaiah Chapter 46

God’s Faithfulness till the end

v1, “Bel” — Babylonian form of Baal

“Nebo” — Babylonian god for learning

The living God and the dead idols are contrasted all
through the Book of Isaiah —

40:17,18; 41:27-29; 42:16,17; 43:11,12; 44:8,9;
45:16,17

And various characters of God are employed in each
contrast. This chapter also presents a contrast (v5).

The important character employed here is —

“God’s faithfulness till the end”

Birth to old age ... End from beginning (vv3-4,10-11)

- *I have borne, I shall bear!* (vv3,4)
- *I have spoken, I shall fulfill!* (v11)
- *I have purposed, I will do!* (v11)

(1) Bearing = God’s protection (vv3,4)

His hands are for protection —

Dt 33:25-27 ... *Eternal God ... everlasting arms*

Jn 10:28-30 ... *My hand ... Father’s hand*

From the womb to the tomb!

- + Experience of Israel (Dt 1:29-31)

All the way as a dad

- + Experience of David (Psa 71:4-6,17-18)

When do we lose it?

- + Love of money

Jn 17:12; Acts 1:16-18; 1 Tim 6:9,10

- + Leaning on the arm of flesh

King Asa ... 2 Chr 16:7-9

(2) Speaking and Fulfilling = God's promise

Num 23:19,20 ... *Has God spoken ... will do it*

Isa 38:15 ... *God has spoken ... has done it*

2 Cor 1:20 ... *All the promises ... Yes ... Amen*

When does it fail?

When we disbelieve and disobey —

- + People of Israel — Psa 95:8-11

- + Moses — Dt 32:48-52

Impossible to please God without faith (Heb 11:6)

(3) Purposing and Performing = God's plan (Isa 46:11)

Job 42:2...*No purpose of God withheld*

Phil 2:13 ... *God ... to will ... to do ...*

When is it frustrated?

- + When we no longer cooperate, with holy fear.

Phil 2:12 ... *Work out ... trembling*

3:13,14 ... *I press toward the goal*

We cannot take it lightly.

We cannot be passive about it.

- + When we choose our own will in the place of God's.

Jesus — Mk 14:35,36

Jesus acknowledges God's all possibility

There will be such times of clash.

Jesus could have escaped,

but He surrendered!

Isaiah Chapter 47

The Doom of Babylon

The reason for the doom of Babylon is given by God Himself in verses 6 to 8 —

“You showed not mercy to My people ... you say in your heart, There’s no one else besides me.”

A brief study of the significance of Babylon

- Babylon has its roots in Babel (Gen 11:1-9)
Chief commencement through Nebuchadnezzar
(Dan 2:37; 3:1)
- Babylon essentially represents —

An anti-God system (anti-Jerusalem Dan 1:1)

Babel ↑	God ↓
Gen 11:4	11:7

Similarly,

Babylon ↑	New Jerusalem ↓
Rev 17:5,6	21:10
:13,14	

- The city of Babylon is already destroyed.
It was situated on the River Euphrates,
about 50 miles from Baghdad, capital of Iraq.
But the system called Babylon awaits its final
and complete destruction at the Second Advent.
Isaiah 47 as well as Revelation 17 & 18 speak of it.
The Babylonian system has 2 aspects —

a) Ecclesiastical or Religious

Rev 17 —	“blasphemy”	(v3)
	“mystery”	(v5)
	“abomination”	(v5)
	“blood of saints”	(v6)
	“seven mountains”	(v9)
	Rome is situated on	
	seven mountains	

b) Political or Commercial

Rev 18 —	“merchants”	(vv3,12)
	“riches”	(v17)
	“ships”	(v17)
	“craftsmen”	(v22)

Christ was repeatedly contrasting the Church
and the world during His last days on earth —

Jn 15:18,19	17:6
16:20	:9
:33	:14,15

Anti-Christ brings together the apostate Church
and his antichristian world system.

i.e. The two aspects: (a)+(b) of Babylonian system.

- Babylon is repeatedly called a “harlot” —
Isa 47:9,12 / Rev 17:1,5

Why? —

Religious apostasy is called by God as adultery —
Jer 13:27; Hos 3:1; Js 4:4

But the Church is a *chaste virgin* —

2 Cor 11:2 ... *betrothed to one Husband, Christ*

Eph 5:25-27 ... *a glorious Church ... no spot or wrinkle*

All the believers of any nation are represented by
Jerusalem as a Mother (Gal 4:26).

Similarly,

All the false religions (including apostate Christianity)
are represented by Babylon as a Mother (Rev 17:5).

- Blessings for the Church (Isa 47:4)

vs. Curses on Babylon

Redeemer — Redemption x Destruction (v15c)

Holy One — Sanctification x Defilement (vv2,3)

Lord of Hosts — Glorification x Dethronement (v1)

What a bitter contrast!

Isaiah Chapter 48

Peace like a River

Key thought: “PEACE”

“Your peace ... like a river” (v18)

“No peace for the wicked” (v22)

Peace is always the portion for God’s people —

+ Birth of Jesus — *“Peace on Earth”*

+ Resurrection — *“Peace be unto you”*

+ Epistles — *“Peace be to you and grace ...”*

It is never for the wicked —

No peace, says the Lord (Isa 48:22)

No peace, says my God (57:21)

The Bible speaks of various kinds of peace and each has
a lesson for us —

(1) Flowing Peace

“Peace like a river” (Isa 48:18)

Condition: Obedience (v18)

No stiffneckedness (vv4,8)

Deploing over Jerusalem (Lk 19:41-44)

(2) Endless Peace

“Of the increase of peace, no end” (Isa 9:7)

Condition: Acknowledge His authority & kingship

by a) Realising our sinfulness and

nothingness (Job 25:2-6)

b) Worship (Psa 29:1,10,11)

(3) Abundant Peace

"The meek delight in the abundance of peace"
(Psa 37:11)

Condition: Meekness

Learning from "Jesus" by coming to
Him (Mt 11:28,29) —
Isa 48:14, *"Assemble and hear"*
:16, *"Come near to Me, hear"*
Close acquaintance with Him (Job 22:21)

(4) Great Peace

"Great peace have those who love Your law"
(Psa 119:165)

Condition: Love the Bible!

Constant meditation of it blesses us
with the presence of the *God of peace*
(Phil 4:8,9)

(5) Incomprehensible Peace

Phil 4:6,7 ... *"Peace of God beyond understanding"*

Condition: Prayer + Thanksgiving

No worry or murmuring,
especially while under chastisement
(Isa 48:10)

Chastisement brings peaceable *fruit* (Heb 12:11,12).

It strengthens our hands (Praise)
and our knees (Prayer) (v12).

(6) Jesus' own Peace (Unlike the world)

"My peace, not as the world gives" (Jn 14:27)

Condition: Fullness of the Holy Spirit.

The context is referring to
Christ's ascension (v28)
and Spirit's descension (v26).
Peace a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22)

(7) Perfect Peace

*"You will keep him in perfect peace
whose mind is stayed on You"* (Isa 26:3)

Condition: Total dependence on the Lord ...

"... mind stayed on You" (v3)
Forsake other *"masters"* (vv12,13)

(This Outline was developed as a full-length article and
published in the Nov-Dec 1981 issue of *Blessing Magazine*.)

Isaiah Chapter 49

The Lord comforts His people!

v13, “The Lord has comforted His people”

- + God is the *God of all* Comfort (2 Cor 1:3)
- + Christ was sent as a Comforter
(2 Thess 2:16,17/Isa 49:6,7)
- + Holy Spirit is the Second Comforter
(Jn 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7)

What a comfort to know all the three Persons of the Godhead are Comforters!

- + Paul, a model Christian, in spite of all trials and tribulations, was “*filled*” with comfort (2 Cor 7:4)
- + All believers to prophecy unto comfort
(1 Cor 14:3)

Earlier,

we saw in Chapter 40, “comfort, *My people, says God*” (v1).

Now in Chapter 49, “*God has comforted His people*” (v13)

We will study from this Chapter how God comforts us:

(1) Comfort through DELIVERANCE

Say to the prisoners, Go forth! (Isa 49:9)
Captives delivered (v24)
I will deliver your children (v25)

The essential ministry of Christ the Comforter

Anointed ... liberty ... comfort ... console
(Isa 61:1-3)

- + From the imprisonment of iniquity
... slave of sin... the Son makes you free
(Jn 8:34-36)
- + From the imprisonment of ignorance
Captivity because no knowledge (Isa 5:13)
The truth makes you free (Jn 8:31-33,43)
- + From the imprisonment of infirmity
Woman, you are loosed from infirmity
(Lk 13:11-13,16)

(2) Comfort through FEEDING

Pastures ... springs (Isa 49:v9b,10)
My Shepherd ... pastures ... rod and staff ...
comfort me (Psa 23:1-4)
The Word of Comfort — (Psa 119:49,50,52,54)
Comfort of the Scriptures (Rom 15:4)

(3) Comfort through REMEMBRANCE and PROTECTION

I will not forget you (Isa 49:14-16)
Fear not, your hairs are numbered (Mt 10:28-31)
Apple of My eye (Zech 2:5-8)

(4) Comfort through FRUITFULNESS

Children ... kings ... queens ... (Isa 49:17-23)
Church growth by the *Spirit's comfort* (Acts 9:31)
End to the lamentation of fruitlessness (Isa 49:4,5)

The Promise:

“You are My servant” (v3)

Isaiah Chapter 50

God's Servants are Counsellors!

v4, *"The Lord God has given Me (Jesus) the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary."*

- Speaking the right word is the primary ministry of God's servants —

Moses (Ex 4:10-16)

Isaiah (Isa 6:5-8)

Jeremiah (Jer 1:4-9)

John Baptist (Lk 3:2)

Jesus (Isa 9:6)

First, *"Wonderful Counsellor"*

The Gifts (1 Cor 12:7,8)

First, Word of Wisdom & Word of Knowledge

The Blessings (Prov 15:23; 25:11)

- "ALL" people are weary —

Mt 9:36 / 11:28

Job 4:3,4 (Job an excellent counsellor)

- How to become a good counsellor

The passage (Isa 50:4-7) refers to Christ.

There are 7 important lessons to learn from Him for the ministry of counselling —

(1) Watchfulness

"He awakens Me morning by morning" (v4)

Mk 1:35 ... *risen very early*

Lk 6:12,13,20 ... Night prayer, morning teaching

Other examples —

Abraham Gen 19:27

Jacob Gen 28:17-19

Moses Ex 34:1-4

David 1 Sam 17:20/Psa 5:3

Job Job 1:5

Our minds are really fresh in the morning due to —

a) Night's rest

b) Noiselessness

(2) Sensitiveness

"He awakens My ear to hear" (Isa 50:4)

Jesus often waited for instructions from Above —

Jn 2:3-5 ... *"My time"* ... Cana

7:6 ... *"My time"* ... Going to Judea

Jn 17:8a ... *Gave the words You gave Me* ...

We must learn to "identify" and "interpret" the divine impulses.

(3) Obedience

"I was not rebellious" (Isa 50:5)

Jn 8:28-30 ... *I do what pleases Him*

Acts 9:6 (Paul) ... *What do You want me to do?*

(4) Firmness

"I did not turn away" (Isa 50:5)

Especially,

in our calling + convictions

Look at Jesus —

Jn 8:14 ... *I know where I came from*
and where I am going

:42 ... *I came from God*

12:27 ... *For this purpose I came*

18:37 ... *For this cause I've come*

Num 22:18; 24:13 ... *I cannot go beyond*

God's Word

If we allow situations or happenings to influence our convictions, we will fail in counselling.

(5) Boldness

"I gave My back ... My cheeks ..." (Isa 50:6)

Fear disturbs frankness

and hence we are not able to present the facts.

Mind not the consequences which may affect you
(*back and cheeks, face*).

God has not given us a spirit of fear ...

(2 Tim 1:7,8)

(6) Humility

"shame and spitting" (Isa 50:6)

Jesus gentle and lowly (Mt 11:28,29)

Be like babes and children (Isa 28:9/Mt 18:4)

(7) Confidence

"Darkness ... no light ..." (Isa 50:10)

Trust on the Lord for results.

There may not be immediate deliverances
or fruits.

But keep doing with the confidence,

*"The Lord God will help Me; therefore I will not
be disgraced!"* (v7)

God allows periods of darkness.

Isaiah Chapter 51

Everlasting Joy

One important thought in this chapter is the Restoration of JOY for God's people —

v3, *"comfort ... joy ... gladness ... thanksgiving ..."*

vv11, *"everlasting joy and gladness ..."*

This is the "Joy of Jesus" (Jn 15:11) — Everlasting
The joy of the world is neverlasting!

How to experience this JOY —

(1) *"Listen to Me"*

(vv1,4,7) repeated thrice

Jn 3:29 ... *Joy of hearing the Bridegroom's voice*

Psa 119:92,111,174 ... Joy through the Word

Do we know this Joy of the Scriptures?

(2) *"Look to the Rock"* (Isa 51:1b)

Psa 16:8-11 — Practising the Presence of God

Quoted by Peter in the context of Pentecostal joy!

(Acts 2:22-28)

(3) Remember the Patriarchs/God's men of old —

(Isa 51:2)

"Look to Abraham your father, Sarah your mother"

Study their lives.

Numerous examples in Hebrews 11

More verses for Abraham than anyone else!

12 verses (vv8-19)

Abraham is an example for —

- + Individual Obedience
- + Believing the impossible
- + Patience for fulfilment
- + Readiness to sacrifice the best

And other men — for trials and persecutions.

(4) Realise, the world is a temporary abode —

"Heaven and earth will vanish, but

Salvation and Righteousness forever" (Isa 51:6)

Joy of answered prayers (Jn 16:23,24)

Joy of Christ's Return (vv 16-22)

Philippians is the Joy Epistle —

"Our citizenship in Heaven" (Phil 3:18-20)

(5) Fear not men!

The *reproach* and *revilings* of men (Isa 51:7)

Why be afraid of men who would die? (v12)

Your Maker vs. Your oppressor (v13)

Heb 13:5,6 ... *"God is my helper;*

What can man do to me?"

(6) Awake, Arise!

An oft-repeated call in Isaiah —

Isa 51:9,17 ... *"Awake, awake ..."*

52:1 ... *"Awake, awake ..."*

Paul quoted it in Eph 5:14 ... *"Arise, shine ..."*

This is our cooperation with God to experience and express the Joy!

We should constantly be "getting up within" —
Joy will be our portion then!

Isaiah Chapter 52

Salvation of God

The key thought in this Chapter is “Salvation” —

- v3, “Redeemed without money”
- v7, “Good news of Salvation”
- v9, “Comforted ... Redeemed”
- v10, “All the earth shall see the Salvation of God”

- Historical reference to —
 - Deliverance of Israel from Egypt (v4)
 - Return of Jews from Babylonian Captivity (v9)
- Salvation is the main theme of both the OT + NT
 - + Song of Simeon (Lk 2:25-32)
“Salvation ... Gentiles ... Israel”
 - + Thanksgiving by Anna (vv36-38)
“Redemption in Jerusalem”
 - + Angel of the Lord to Joseph (Mt 1:21)
“His name, Jesus ... shall save His people ...”
 - + “So great a Salvation” (Heb 2:3,4)
- Observations in this chapter (Isa 52) —
 - v4a** — We went astray voluntarily
Lk 15:11-13 (Prodigal son)
 - vv4b,5** — Life without Christ is
oppression + bondage.
Ex 2:23; 3:7,8
Jn 8:32-34

- v13** — God’s answer is JESUS (*My Servant*)
“A Prophet like Moses”
Dt 18:15,18
Acts 3:19,20,22
7:35,37

- vv3,14** — Redemption too costly to be purchased
with money. Blood required.
1 Pet 1:18,19 ... *not silver or gold*
but blood
Heb 9:11,12 ... *not blood of animals*
but of Christ
Wealth and riches cannot buy it
(Psa 49:6-9)

- vv1,2** — Salvation becomes effective only when
individuals “believe” and “come out”
eg) Lk 15:20a ... “Prodigal arose”
Acts 2:39-41 ... 3000 on the
Day of Pentecost
This is ALTAR CALL — from the audience!

- v6** — Salvation is personal knowledge of Christ.
Jn 17:3 — *Eternal Life*
Isa 53:11 — *Made righteous*
Dan 11:32 — *Covenant*

- vv7,8** — The immediate “good things” of Salvation:
JOY + PEACE
Lk 2:10-14 ... *Great joy, Peace on earth*
Jn 14:27; 15:11 ... *My peace ... My joy*
Gal 5:22... First two manifestations of love

- vv9,10** — The following “*good things*”
 Power of God ... “*arm*”
 Comfort of the Holy Spirit
 Compare Mt 7:11, “*good gifts*”
 with Lk 11:13, “*Holy Spirit*”
- v7** — “*Your God reigns!*”
 Lordship — New Government (Isa 9:7)
- v11** — Moment-by-moment sanctification
 “*Depart! Depart! Go out! Be clean!*”
 Acts 2:40 ... from the world
 Jude 23 ... from the flesh
 2 Pet 1:3,4... Partake divine nature
- v12** — Perfect protection promised
 1 Jn 4:4 ... *He who’s in you greater*
 Jude 24,25 ... *Keep you ... present you*
 ... *faultless*
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Isaiah Chapter 53

Suffering and Glory

This is the greatest passion chapter in the OT.

It begins with two questions —

- v1, “*Who has believed our report?*”
 “*To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?*”

Two words: “*Believed ... Revealed*”

Believing is by hearing the Gospel.

Revelation is by the power of God —
 “*arm*” of the Lord

The Gospel is the “power” of God (Rom 1:16).

The message of the Cross is the “power” of God
 (1 Cor 1:18)

Salvation is essentially a REVELATION

Lk 10:22 ... “*The Son reveals the Father*”

Gal 1:15,16 ... “*It pleased God to reveal*

His Son in me”

Sorrows/Sufferings and Glory

Sufferings — Isa 53:2-10a

... *rejected ... despised ... wounded ... bruised ...*
oppressed ... afflicted ... cut off ... stricken ...

Glory — vv10b-12

... *prosper ... prolong ... pleasure ... satisfied*
 ... *justify ...*

- + Present sufferings ... future glory (Rom 8:16-18)
- + Sufferings ... Resurrection (Phil 3:7-11)

■ Three kinds of suffering —

- (1) Suffering FROM men (Isa 53:3)
- (2) Suffering WITH men (:4)
- (3) Suffering FOR men (:5)

(1) Suffering FROM men (v3)

Despised ... Grieved ...
Rejected ... Forsaken...
Sorrowed ... Disregarded ...

- Lk 21:17 — *Hated of all men*
 :16 — even by the close ones
 Mt 5:11,12 — Our reaction
 1 Pet 4:13-16 — Spirit of Glory and Suffering
 2:19-23

(2) Suffering WITH men (v4)

- Bearing
 Carrying
- Rom 12:15-16 — *Weep, those who weep*
 Gal 6:2 — *Bear one another's burdens*
 Jer 9:1 — Tears for God's people
 2 Cor 11:28,29 — Paul's testimony

(3) Suffering FOR men (v5)

Wounded ...
Bruised ...
Chastised ...

Readiness to suffer for men is the characteristic of a man of God —

Eg) Moses (Ex 32:32)
"O God, forgive them or forget me!"

Paul (Rom 9:1-3)
"Ready to be cursed for my people"

Paul's list of sufferings in
 2 Cor 11:24-27; 2 Cor 4:7-12

Conclusion

2 Cor 4:15-18
"Outer man perishing, inner man renewed"
"Light affliction ... eternal weight of glory"
"Temporal ... eternal"

Isaiah Chapter 54

Blessings of Calvary

- We watch sighing in Chapter 53.
We hear singing in Chapter 54.

We see the Saviour with His bleeding hands in Chapter 53.
We meet Him with His blessing hands in Chapter 54.

- Chapter 54 begins with a call to “sing” (v1)

This chapter is normally interpreted as a prophecy concerning the Nation of Israel.

It also has so many spiritual lessons for us the New Testament Christians.

The sufferings in Chapter 53 lead to the blessings in Chapter 54. There are at least six blessings promised in this Chapter —

(1) Evangelism and Church growth

v2, “*Enlarge the place of your tent ... Lengthen and strengthen ... Expand to the right and to the left... Inherit the nations*”

God’s will for the Church is multiplication.

Missionary Evangelism must top our agenda —

Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15; Lk 24:45-48; Acts 1:8

“Lengthen” → Evangelisation of the world

“Strengthen” → Edification of the Church

Both must go hand in hand (Acts 9:31)

(2) Bride of Christ

Isa 54:5, “*Your Maker is your husband*”

This is a specific promise God had made to the people of Israel regarding their final restoration —

Hos 2:16,19, “*It shall be, in that day, that you will call Me my Husband, and no longer call Me my Master ... I will betroth you to Me forever*”

This has of course become applicable today to the Church which is the Bride of Christ.

Paul: “*I have betrothed you to one Husband ... Christ*”
(2 Cor 11:2)

Read also Eph 5:23-32

We are dead to the law and married to another Husband, even Christ! (Rom 7:1-6)

Rev 19:7-9, “*Marriage of the Lamb ... His wife ready*”

What a blessing that God has chosen us from Gentiles to become a part of the Bride of His Son!

Isa 54:5, “*Your Redeemer is not only the Holy One of Israel but also the God of the whole earth!*”

Gal 4:26-28, “*The Jerusalem above is the mother of us all, who are the children of promise like Isaac.*”

(3) Sufferings and Glory

Isa 54:7,8, *“For a mere moment I have forsaken you,
but with great mercies I will gather you.
With a little wrath I hid My face from you
a moment but with everlasting kindness
I will have mercy on You”*

This speaks about how God scattered Israel all over the world because they did not walk in His ways. But He has not cast them away forever.

Paul: *“Has God cast away His people?
Certainly not!”* (Rom 11:1).

Because of the rejection by the Jews,
salvation has come to us the Gentiles (v11).

This was foretold by Jesus (Mt 21:42,43)

The apostles turned to the Gentiles when the Jews rejected the Gospel (Acts 13:46-48).

“For a mere moment I have forsaken you” —

This has reference to Christ who was “forsaken” by God the Father for a “mere moment” on the Cross. When the sins of the whole world came on Jesus, and He became sin for us, God who cannot wink at sin *“hid His face a moment.”* That’s when Jesus cried, *“My God, My God, Why have You forsaken Me?”*

Rom 8:18, Our present sufferings in this earthly life cannot be compared with the eternal glory that’s to follow.

2 Cor 4:17, *“Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”*

(4) No wrath, only peace

Isa 54:9,10, *“I would not be angry with you,
nor rebuke you ... My kindness ...
My covenant of peace”*

Because the wrath of God against sin came on Jesus, it will not be poured on us who believe on Him —

Rom 5:9, *“Having been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath through Him.”*

1 Thess 1:10, *“Jesus delivers us from the wrath to come”*
5:9, *“God did not appoint us to wrath,
but to Salvation”*

The peace of God, as against His wrath, is available to both Jews and Gentiles if we believe on the finished work on the Cross (Eph 2:14-18).

(5) Glorious Church

Isa 54:11,12, *“Colourful jems ... sapphires ... rubies ...
crystal ... precious stones”*

Because of Calvary, we have a Church that’s glorious within and without —

vv11,12, *“Foundations ... pinnacles ... gates ... walls”*

+ This is what Paul calls as the “House of God” and a “Holy Temple” (Eph 2:19-22). Note the word “therefore” connecting verses 13-18 and 19-22.

- + Jesus sanctifies and cleanses us to make us a “glorious Church” (5:25-27)
- + Peter calls this as a “*Spiritual House*” and the individual believers as “*living stones*” (1 Pet 2:4,5).
- + John in his vision sees New Jerusalem adorned with “*all kinds of precious stones*” (Rev 21:17-21).

The “Church” of today will have its final glory as the “*Heavenly Jerusalem*” (Heb 12:22,23).

Isa 54:13 foretells the blessing of each of God’s children under the New Covenant.

Jesus quotes this verse in Jn 6:45 —

“They shall all be taught by God.”

Referring to the New Covenant, the writer of Hebrews lists this as one of the blessings of the believers in Christ (Heb 8:11)

The “*Spirit of Christ*” in each believer is the “*anointing*” that teaches him to eschew deceptive doctrines

(Rom 8:9; 1 Jn 2:26,27)

(6) Victory in Warfare

Isa 54:14-17, “*Oppression ... terror ... conspiracy ... weapon ... accusation*”

The “*gates of hell*” will always work against us, but would not *prevail* (Mt 16:18)

We will be “*more than conquerors*” in “*tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and sword*” (Rom 8:35-37)

We can boldly say, “The Lord is my Helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” (Heb 13:6)

The spiritual warfare is primarily an attack on our “standing” with God. The devil keeps accusing us day and night (Rev 12:10). But God’s never-failing promise is,

“In righteousness you shall be established ... Your righteousness is from Me” (Isa 54:14,17).

It is on this ground Apostle Paul challenged,

“Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? Who is he who condemns? ... It is God who justifies” (Rom 8:33,34).

Christ Himself who suffered for us not only “*justifies*” us but also becomes our very “*righteousness*” (Isa 53:11; 1 Cor 1:30).

Oh, the blessed Calvary!

Isaiah Chapter 55

Maximum Benefit from Bible Meditation

In this Chapter the Word of God is compared to —

- (a) Wine (v1) → Delight (Prov 31:6,7)
- (b) Milk (v1) → Growth (1 Pet 2:1-3)
- (c) Bread (v2) → Sustenance (Mt 4:4)
- (d) Fatness (v2) → Abundance (Neh 8:10)
- (e) Rain (vv10,11) → Refreshing (Ezek 34:26,27)
- (f) Seed (v10) → Fruitfulness (2 Cor 9:10)

How to get the best out of Bible meditation —

(1) Be thirsty, realizing you have/know nothing (v1)

Isa 55:1, *“Everyone who thirsts, come ...
You who have no money, come!”*

- Lk 1:53 — Mary’s Song
- Mt 5:6 — Jesus’ Sermon
- Acts 10:33,41 — Cornelius’ family
(Religious yet thirsty)

Earnestness, Enthusiasm, Expectation, etc.

(2) Stop seeking satisfaction in anything other than the Scriptures (v2)

Isa 55:2 — *“Why spend money for what’s not bread
and your wages for what does not satisfy?”*

Jer 2:13 — The twin evil

- Prov 25:16 — Even good things like honey
- :17 — Visiting the friends (chit-chat)
- :27 — Appreciation from people

Jer 15:16,17 — Jeremiah’s testimony
Pastimes, Hobbies, etc.

(3) Seek to find the LORD in the Scriptures (v6)

Isa 55:6, *“Seek the Lord while He may be found”*

Not principles but the PERSON (Jn 5:39)
The Jews studied the Scriptures but
missed the Person.

The Bible of God (or) the God of the Bible?
Spoken Word ... Written Word ... Incarnate
Word

*“In the beginning was the Word ... with God ...
was God ... the Word became flesh”* (Jn 1:1,2,14)

(4) Hate sin and seek holiness (v7)

Isa 55:7, *“Let the wicked forsake his way ... return to
the Lord ... He will pardon”*

Psa 1:1 ... *“Walk not ... stand not ... sit not ...
but delight in the Word”*

1 Pet 2:1 ... *“Lay aside malice, guile, ...
desire the Word”*

Scriptures are by the HOLY Spirit
through HOLY men (2 Pet 1:21)
and they are HOLY (2 Tim 3:15).

Meditation of the Scriptures and Motivation for
Saintliness must go together.

(5) Don't try to fit God and His ways into your human logic
(vv8,9)

Isa 55:8,9, "*My thoughts are not your thoughts ...
My ways higher ...*"

Rev 1:3 — *Read, Hear, Obey.*
"Understanding" not mentioned!

God is not obliged to give explanations!

Prov 25:2 ... *It's the glory of God to
conceal a matter*

Dt 29:29 ... *Secret things belong to God*

Rom 11:33-36 ... *God's ways unsearchable*

Promise:

If these instructions are followed, God's Word will
have its intended work done in our lives —

"It will not return empty" (Isa 55:10,11)

We will go rejoicing (v12) and
glorifying (v13) His Name!

(This Outline was developed as a full-length article and
published in the Sept 1982 issue of *Blessing Magazine*.)

Isaiah Chapter 56

How to turn Prayer from Duty to Delight

v7, "*I will make them joyful in My house of prayer*"

Prayer is more a duty
than a delight to most of us.

How to turn prayer from duty to delight:

The lessons are explicit from this Chapter
but are implicit —

(1) Feed on the Promises of Prayer Possibilities

Isa 56:7b, "*Burnt offerings and sacrifices will be
offered on My altar*"

Mt 7:7 ...

A — **A**sk ... *receive*

S — **S**eek ... *find*

K — **K**nock ... *open*

Encouragement by illustration —

bread ... egg ... fish ... Your Father

(Mt 7:8-11; Lk 11:11-13)

See also Js 5:16b-18 and 1 Jn 5:14,15

How God honoured the Praying of Jesus —

Lk 3:21,22 — Heaven + Dove

9:28-31 — Transfiguration + Conversation

22:41-43 — Angel

(2) Maintain a clear conscience

Isa 56:1a,2b,6c,7a, *“Keep justice and do righteousness
... Keep off your hand from evil
... Hold fast God’s covenant
... Holy mountain ...”*

1 Jn 3:20-22 ↑ — Heart condemning
Js 5:16 ↔ — Mutual confessions
Dan 6:22 — Daniel’s life

(3) Saturate prayer with Praise/Thanksgiving

Isa 56:6a, *“Join the Lord to serve Him ...
Love the Name of the Lord to be His servants”*

Mt 21:13,16 — House of Prayer/Praise of children
Phil 4:6 — *Prayer and thanksgiving*
Col 4:2 — *Continue in thanksgiving*

eg) Paul + Silas — Acts 16:25 (Prison cell)
Daniel — Dan 6:10 (Lions’ den)

(4) Lean on the intercessory ministry of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit

Isa 56:1,4c,6c,7, *“My salvation, My righteousness,
My Covenant, My Mountain,
My house, My altar”*

• Jesus Christ —

Heb 4:14-16 ... *High Priest ... Throne of Grace*
7:25,26 ... *High Priest ... Intercession*
10:19-22 ... *Blood of Jesus ... full assurance*

“In the Name of Jesus” —

Jn 16:22-24 ... *In My name*
Eph 5:20 ... *In the name of Jesus Christ*
3:14 ... *Father of our Lord Jesus*

• Holy Spirit —

Rom 8:26,27 ... *Intercession for us*
Eph 6:18 ... *Prayer in the Spirit*
Jude 20 ... *Praying in the Holy Spirit*

(5) Expect the answer in God’s way and God’s time —

+ God’s way —

Isa 56:1b,2a, *“My salvation about to come ...
My righteousness about to be
revealed ... Hold on”*

Mk 14:35,36 ... Jesus in Gethsamane

+ God’s time —

Heb 10:36 ... *Patience to receive*

(This Outline was developed as a full-length article and published in the Nov-Dec 1982 issue of *Blessing Magazine*.)

Isaiah Chapter 57

Brokenness

v15, *"I live in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the heart of the contrite ones"*

(A) What is Brokenness?

From the opening verses of the Sermon on the Mount—

Mt 5:3 — *Poorness in spirit*

Towards God in "Heaven" ↑

:4 — *Mourning*

Over our own condition ↓

:5 — *Meekness*

Towards others on the "earth" ↔

(B) Blessings of Brokenness (OT references of James 4)

We will comparatively study verses from Isaiah 57 and elsewhere from the OT with the Epistle of James

(1) Revival in the inner man

Isa 57:15b, *"I will revive ... revive"*

Js 4:6,10 ... *"Grace to the humble ...
Exaltation to lofty places"*

(2) Enjoyment of God's intimate presence

Isa 57:15a, *"I dwell with him ..."*

Isa 66:1,2, *"I will look on him who has a
contrite spirit"*

Mt 5:3, *"poor in spirit ... Kingdom of Heaven"*

Js 4:8a, *"God will draw near to you"*

(3) Deliverance from afflictions

Isa 57:1,14, *"Righteous taken away from evil"*

Psa 34:17-20, *"The Lord is near those of a
broken heart ... The Lord
delivers him out of all affliction."*

Js 4:7, *"The devil will flee from you"*

(4) Joy of Forgiveness and Cleansing

Isa 57:17-19, *"I will heal his backsliding ...
Peace, peace ..."*

Psa 51:17,18, *"Broken spirit ... contrite heart ...
God's good pleasure"*

Compare with Js 4:8,9

(C) How to maintain brokenness

(1) By the Word of God

Jer 23:29 ... *"My Word ... a hammer"*

(2) Through the vision of God's highness and holiness

Isa 6:1,5, *"I saw the Lord sitting on a Throne
... I said, I'm undone ... unclean lips"*

Job 42:5,6, *"Earlier I heard You ...
Now I see You ... Therefore I repent
in dust and ashes"*

Psa 16:8,9, *"I've set the Lord always before me ...
Therefore my heart is glad"*

(3) By mutual counsel + exhortation

Heb 3:13, *"Exhort one another daily lest you
be hardened"*

(D) God needs our cooperation in breaking us.

"I will not contend forever" (Isa 57:16)

"My Spirit shall not strive with man forever"

(Gen 6:3)

The blessing of blessings —

"THE LOFTY GOD WITH THE LOWLY MAN"

Isaiah Chapter 58

Fasting that God favours

This Chapter contains a classic passage on Fasting. Two challenging questions by God highlight the difference between wrong fasting and right fasting —

(a) *"Is it a fast that I've chosen?"* (v5a)

(b) *"Is this not the fast that I've chosen?"* (v6a)

(A) The wrong kind of fasting

1) No repentance

v1, *"Tell My people their transgression ... sins"*

Similar call through Prophet Joel —

"Turn to Me ... with fasting ... weeping" (Joel 2:12)

2) Hypocrisy

Isa 58:2, *"Transgression ... but they seek Me daily"*

3) Isa 58:3a, *"Why have we fasted,
and You have not seen?"*

God is obliged to no man.

He is complete in and by Himself.

+ Our worship adds nothing to Him

*"Your glorious name is exalted above all blessing
and praise!"* (Neh 9:5b)

+ In the strict sense, we cannot "give" Him anything
because He owns everything (Rom 11:35,36)

- + Our sin does not mar Him; our sanctity does not add anything to Him (Job 35:6-8)
- + We cannot really accomplish anything “great” for Him
Lk 17:10, *“Unprofitable servants ... only duty”*
- + Even Christ in His life or death added nothing to the Father God’s absolute glory
Psa 16:2,3, *“My goodness is nothing ...”*
This is a Messianic Psalm (v10)

Compare the God of the Bible with that of your mental picture (Isa 40:15-18)

4) Indisciplined routine

Isa 58:3b,13, *“In the day of your fast you find pleasure”*
“My holy day ... your own ways ... your own works”

5) Strife and peacelessness

Isa 58:4, *“Strife ... debate ... wickedness ... noise”*
Apostle James sternly warns God’s people against this (Js 4:1-3).

6) Self-affliction to impress people

Isa 58:5, *“A day for a man to afflict his soul?”*
Jesus condemned it in His Sermon on the Mount:
Mt 6:16, *“sad face ... appear to men to be fasting”*

(B) The right kind of Fasting

Isa 58:6,7 speak of the right kind of Fasting.

This essentially means foregoing or sacrificing some of our comforts and luxuries in order to —

1. *Loose the bonds of wickedness*
2. *Undo the heavy burdens*
3. *Let the oppressed go free*
4. *Break every yoke*
5. *Share bread with the hungry*
6. *Bring home the wandering poor*
7. *Cover the naked*

All these seven activities are charitable deeds which are summarised as *“not hiding oneself from his own flesh,”* which means blessing the needy.

■ Blessings of right Fasting

1) Spiritual enlightenment

Isa 58:8a, *“Your light shall break forth like morning”*
v10b, *“Your light shall dawn in the dark”*

- (a) To know God (Eph 1:17-19)
- (b) To make Him known (Mt 5:16)

2) Personal sanctification

Isa 58:8b, *“Your righteousness shall go before you”*

3) Answered prayers

v9, *“You shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am!’ ”*

4) Satisfaction and Satiation

v11, *"The Lord will satisfy your soul ... strengthen
your bones ... watered garden ... spring of water."*

Abundant guidance (v11a)

5) Tool for restoration

v12, *"You shall build the old waste places ...
Repairer ... Restorer"*

Oh, how much we all need to correct our understanding
of Fasting!

Isaiah Chapter 59

Scarcity on the Earth

v16, *"God saw that there was no man,
and wondered that there was no intercessor"*

We observe a fourfold scarcity highlighted in this chapter—

(1) No man to seek God and walk righteousness!

v4, *"No one calls for justice, nor does any plead
for truth"*

v6, *"Works of iniquity ... act of violence"*

v7b, *"thoughts of iniquity"*

v8b, *"Crooked paths"*

v12, *"multiplied transgressions ... sins"*

- + Elihu's lamentation (Job 35:10,11)
- + David's observation (Psa 14:1,3)
- + God's complaint (Isa 66:4)
- + Hosea's prophecy (Hos 11:7)
- + Micah's prophecy (Mic 7:2)
- + Paul's lengthy quote (Rom 3:10-12)

(2) No man to intercede!

Isa 59:16, *"God wondered that there was no intercessor"*

vv1-3, *"His hand not shortened ... His ear not stopped
... our iniquities ... our sins ..."*

Spiritual Darkness —

v9b, *“darkness, not light ... blackness, no brightness”*

Isaiah laments before God —

64:7, *“There is no one who calls on Your name,
who stirs himself up to take hold of You”*

Prophet Ezekiel echoes the lamentation of God
Himself —

Ezek 22:29-31

*“I sought for a man to stand in the gap ...
but I found none”*

But today we have two God-sent Helpers in our
ministry of intercession —

Isa 59:16,17

“His own arm ... His own righteousness”

Christ there in Heaven (Rom 8:34)

Holy Spirit here in our hearts (vv26,27)

Examples of intercessors —

+ Abraham (Gen 18:20-24,32)

+ Moses (Ex 32:30-32)

+ Paul (Rom 9:1-3; 10:1; 1 Tim 2:1-4)

(3) No man to proclaim God's message!

Isa 59:4, *“empty words ... lies”*

:13, *“speaking oppression, revolt, words of
falsehood”*

:14b, *“Truth fallen in the street”*

:20, *“The Redeemer will come”*

:21, *“God's Spirit upon us ... His words
in our mouth”*

The never-ending call for soulwinners and evangelists —

Isa 6:8,9, *“Whom shall I send? Who will go for Us?”*

41:26-28, *“No one who shows ... declares ...
no counsellor”*

Lk 10:1,2, *“The harvest truly is great, but the
labourers are few ... Therefore pray ...”*

When Dr. Alexander Duff (1806-1878), after long
years of missionary work in India, saw that no
youngster responded to his missionary call to go to
India, he broke down on the pulpit, saying, “Then I
would again go!” Hundreds responded then.

(4) No man to comfort!

Isa 59:7a, *“They shed innocent blood”*

:8, *“They don't know the way of peace”*

:11a, *“They growl like bears and moan like doves”*

:19, The glory of God on those who fear Him
... His Spirit raises a banner for them
against the enemies floodlike invasion.

David laments, *“I looked for someone to take pity, but
there was none ... no comforter”* (Psa 69:19,20). This
was a Messianic prophecy (v21).

Jesus had to face alone God's anger against sin, by shedding blood (Isa 63:2-5).

God's Word through Ezekiel: "*My flock scattered ... No one searching for them*" (Ezek 34:5,6).

Jesus remembered this prophecy when He saw multitudes without a shepherd (Mt 9:36,37).

Selfish shepherds outnumber sincere ones (Phil 2:20,21).

Scarcity! Scarcity!

- (1) For Saints
— Give yourself to righteous walk.
 - (2) For Supplicators
— Give yourself to intercessory prayer.
 - (3) For Sowers/Soulwinners
— Give yourself to untiring evangelism.
 - (4) For Succourers & Shepherds
— Give yourself to comforting ministry.
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Isaiah Chapter 60

The Church Glorious

Chapters 60 to 66 speak of Israel's future glory.

Note the repeated occurrences of the word "*glory*" in Chapter 60 —

vv1,2,7,9,13,19,21

Key text:

v7, "*I will glorify the House of My glory!*"

By a comparative study of Isaiah 60 and Ephesians 1 to 6, we shall find out the characteristics of a Glorious Church—

(1) It's a RIGHTEOUS Church.

Isa 60:14 ... *Holy One of Israel* (God)
:17 ... *Righteous Magistrates* (Leaders)
:21 ... *Righteous people* ("all" of them)

Eph 5:26,27 ... *sanctify ... no wrinkle ... glorious*
4:19-24 ... Righteousness within (= mind ... v23)
a) Uncleanliness (vv19,22;5:3)
b) Greediness (vv19;5:3)
4:25-32 ... Righteousness without
i.e with fellowmen (= neighbour ... v25)
a) *lying* (v25)
b) *anger* (v26)
c) *stealing* (v28)
d) *speaking evil* (v29)

This is "true holiness" (v24)

The greatest revival is the revival of righteousness
(Hos 10:12)

eg) Wesley/Finney ... Moral climate of nations

Preach, “*The Kingdom has come to you!*”

It is first of all “*righteousness*” (Rom 14:17)

Seek first the *Kingdom* and His “*Righteousness*” (Mt 6:33)

(2) It’s a REJOICING Church.

Isa 60:5b ... *heart swelling with joy*

:6d ... *praises to the Lord*

:15c ... *a joy of many generations*

:18d ... *gates called Praise*

:20d ... *days of mourning ended*

Eph 5:18-20 ... *Spiritfulness & singing*

Why we need revival —

Psa 85:6 ... *Will You not ... rejoice in You?*

Joel 1:16 ... *joy and gladness cut off ...*

Revival restores joy —

Joel 2:23 ... *Rejoice ... former ... latter rain ...*

Hab 3:2,17-19 ... *Change of attitude of the prophet ...*

The “WHYs” became “WORSHIP!” (1:3,13,14)

This is “genuine” joy!

Not worked up, but spontaneous!

A jubilation ... A festive spirit ...

The Kingdom of God is “JOY” ... (Rom 14:17)

(3) It’s a RESTFUL Church.

Isa 60:8 ... *doves*

:17 ... *officers called peace!*

:18 ... *no more violence*

Eph 1:2/6:23 ... *peace to you ...*

2:14-17 ... *He Himself our Peace ...*

4:3 ... *bond of Peace*

(*Unity of Spirit — v3 vs. Unity of faith — v13*)

6:15 ... *Gospel of peace*

Peace and Quietness because of divine order —

+ One another ... Eph 5:21

+ Between spouses ... 5:22,33

+ Parents + Children ... 6:1-4

+ Masters + Servants ... 6:5-9

Revival and Restoration —

The Elijah ministry (A ministry of Restoration)

Mal 4:5,6 ... *Fathers and Children*

Mt 17:10-13 ... John ... to restore all things

Restoration is normally resisted — Mt 17:12

John the Baptist ... for I Coming

Holy Spirit ... for II Coming

The world today ...

Chaos, Conflicts, ...

Violence, Villainy, ...

The Glorious Church will be the model —

+ “*Love one another that ALL may know ...*” (Jn 13:35)

+ “*They all be one ... the WORLD may believe ...*” (Jn 17:21)

This is real “*glory*” (v22)

Pentecost gave a foretaste of this —

Acts 2:43,44 ... *Fear*

4:32,33 ... *Great power*

The Kingdom of God is ... “PEACE” (Rom 14:17)

(4) It’s a REIGNING/RULING Church.

Isa 60:12 ... Disobedient nations perish.

:14 ... *bowing ... prostrating ...*

:22 ... *a strong nation*

Eph 1:3 ... *seated above*

:20-22 ... Christ & Church ruling together

4:7,8 ... Ascension *gifts*

6:10-12 ... Spiritual warfare

The Church is to exercise Heaven’s authority on Earth —

Mt 18:15-18 ... The Church represents

Christ’s authority on earth (*Two or Three!*)

The Message of the Church —

“*Your God reigns!*” (Isa 52:7)

John/Jesus/Paul ... preached “*Kingdom*”

The Church must affect the society for good.

It must be consulted on national affairs —

eg) What to condemn (bind)

and what to forgive (loose)

eg) Joseph (Gen 41:14-16)

— Pharaoh’s dream

Daniel (Dan 4:18)

— Nebuchadnezzar’s dream

Indian politicians are consulting soothsayers & godmen.

(5) It’s a REPLENISHING/REPRODUCING Church.

Isa 60:4 ... *sons & daughters from around*

:11 ... *gates open continuously*

:18 ... *Walls of Salvation*

:22a ... *a little one becomes a thousand!*

God’s plan is multiplication —

Eph 2:17 ... *Preached to those “afar off”*

Similar to Peter’s statement on Pentecost Day

3:8 ... Preach the Gospel to the Gentiles

6:19,20 ... *bold utterance*

“Narrow gate” vs. “Narrow mind!”

God’s promise to Abraham —

The father of all believers.

Stars (Gen 15:5)

Sand (22:17)

Dust (13:16)

Kingdom: *Mustard seed*

Little leaven

Mt 13:31-33

Small beginning but spectacular growth!

Pentecostal Revival: 3000 ... 5000 ... multitudes

Evangelize or Fossilize!
Dry bones ... Dynamic batallion (Ezek 37:1-10)

(6) It's a RICH/RESOURCEFUL Church.

Isa 60:6 ... *camels, gold, incense*
:9 ... *ships, silver, ...*
:13 ... *cypress, pine ... trees*
:17 ... *gold for bronze ... silver for iron ...*
bronze for wood ... iron for stones ...
Eph 1:3 ... *all spiritual blessings*
:18 ... *riches of glory*
:23 ... *Fullness of Him*
3:8 ... *Unsearchable riches*
:19,20 ... *God's fullness >> our thoughts*
4:7,8 ... *Gifts to men*

What Revival does ...

A prophetic picture —
Joel 3:18 ... *wine ... milk ... brooks ...*

But today's Church —

Rev 3:17,18 (Laodiceans)
— material prosperity but spiritual poverty
(bounty) (bankruptcy)

A famine for the Word!
Lean songs ... Lean sermons ... Lean saints

(7) It's a RADIANT/REVERED/RESPECTED Church.

Isa 60:1 ... *Arise, your light has come!*
:3 ... *Gentiles ... Kings ... to your brightness*

:5a ... *Radiant*
:15 ... *eternal excellence*
:19,20 ... *The Lord is everlasting light.*

Eph 5:14 ... *Awake, Arise! Christ will give you light!*

A call to stir up!
God does His part; shall we do ours?
eg) Rise up and walk! (Acts 3)

40 years of wilderness experience enough! (Acts 4:22)

Conclusion

□ The 7-fold glory comparable to the 7 colours of the
Rainbow —

Red — Righteousness
Orange — Resourcefulness (fruit)
Yellow — Radiance
Green — Replenishing
Blue — Rejoicing (in the Heavenlies)
Indigo — Restful (the colour of the night)
Violet — Reigning (Royal)

□ How the devil works against all these —

From Revelation 2 & 3 ...

1. Righteousness x Jezebel (Rev 2:20)
2. Rejoicing x Prison (2:10)
3. Restful x Opposed by the Synagogue of
Satan (2:9;3:9)
4. Reigning x Throne of Satan (2:13)

5. Replenishing x Trying to shut the open doors
(3:7,8,9)

6. Resourceful x Way of Balaam (2:14)

7. Radiant x Wretched, blind, naked... (3:17,18)

— The first letter is to the Ephesian Church (Rev 2:1-7).

— The Epistle to Ephesians ends up with a warfare passage.

The great day when the Church will be presented —

Jude 24,25 ... *faultless* ...

Rev 19:7 ... *glory* ... *ready* ... *glory*

GOD HIMSELF BECOMES THE GLORY OF THE CHURCH!

(Isa 60:19c)

Isaiah Chapter 61

The God-blessed People

v9, “*The seed which the Lord has blessed*”

Let’s study this Chapter under three heads —

- 1) The Process of Blessing
- 2) The Purpose of Blessing
- 3) The Possibility of Blessing

(1) The Process of Blessing (vv1-3)

- a) “*preach ... good tidings ... meek*” (v1)
— salvation of soul (Js 1:21)
- b) “*the brokenhearted*” (v1)
“*comfort*” those who mourn (v2)
“*Beauty ... joy ... peace*” (v3)
— Peace of mind
- c) “*proclaim liberty ... opening of prison*” (v1)
— Victory over sin (Rom 8:2; 6:14)
- d) “*proclaim acceptable year of the Lord*” (v2)
— Growth in Grace (2 Cor 6:1,2)
- e) “*proclaim the day of vengeance*” (v2)
— Preparation for future (Rev 22:11-12)

(2) The Purpose of Blessing

That we may be —

- a) The PLANTS of the Lord (v3b)
= *Trees of Righteousness*

Isa 5:7 — *Jacob, pleasant plant ... wild grapes*

Num 24:5,6 — Beauty of God's plants

Isa 53:2 — Jesus the Pattern Plant

= *Righteous servant* (v11)

Jn 15:1-3,8 — *Fruit ... holiness ... glorified*

(Compare Isa 61:3b)

b) The PRIESTS of the Lord (v6)

= Ministers of our God

Gen 14:18-20 — First mention of Priest —

Context: Worship (Praise)

(1 Pet 2:5)

Joel 1:13 — Priests are to pray.

2:17 eg) Jesus (Heb 7:24,25)

c) The POSSESSORS of the Land (vv6b-8)

“the Gentiles” (vv6,9)

The most important mission to be accomplished—

Acts 1:7,8 ... witness!

Mt 24:14 ... witness!

Psa 2:8 — The Father teaching the Son to

pray — for POSSESSION!

(3) The Possibility of Blessing

v11, “As ... As ...” (Just like)

a) Righteousness— Inward — Selfward

b) Praise — Upward — Godward

c) Nations — Outward — Manward

WE ARE BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING!

Isaiah Chapter 62

Our God is a God of Pairs!

This chapter is full of pairs —

eg) Zion/Jerusalem (v1); Crown of glory/Royal diadem (v3);

Forsaken/Desolate (v4a); Hephzibah/Beulah (v4b);

Bridegroom/Bride (v5); Salvation/Reward (v11);

Holy people/The Redeemed (v12)

The key text for this Chapter can be the one in

Chapter 34 verse 16 —

“Search from the Book of the Lord and read ...

Not one shall lack her mate"

Biblical Examples:

1) Creation — Heaven + Earth (Gen 1:1)

Man + Woman (1:27)

2) Man ———— $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Outer man} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Corruptible Body} \\ \text{Incorruptible body} \end{array} \right. \\ \text{Inner man} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Soul} \\ \text{Spirit} \end{array} \right. \end{array} \right.$
(Crown of Creation)

3) Bible — Law + Testimony (Isa 8:20)

OT + NT (Mt 13:52)

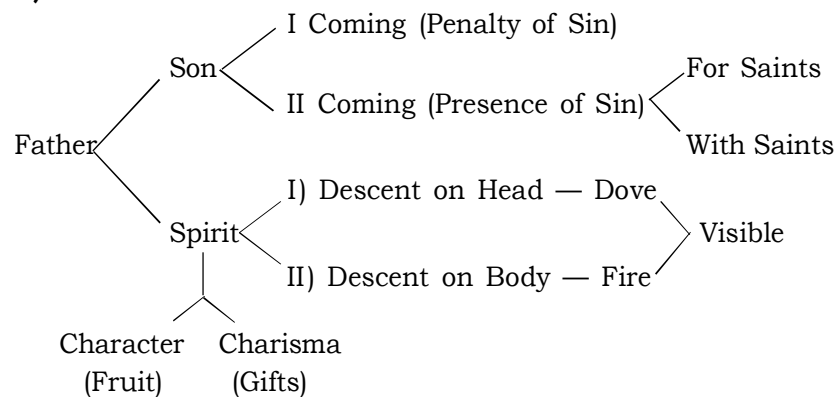
4) Commandments

+ Love God and Love man (Mt 22:35-40)

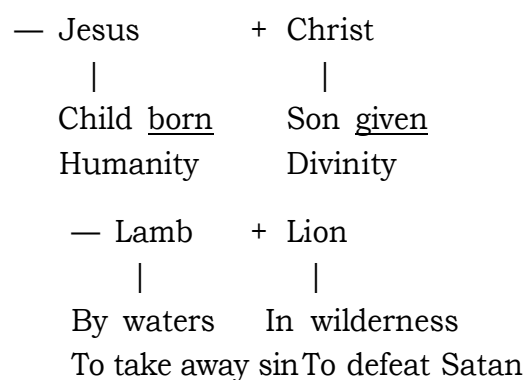
- + Conscience before God & Man (Acts 24:16)

- + Heart and Mouth (Psa 19:14)

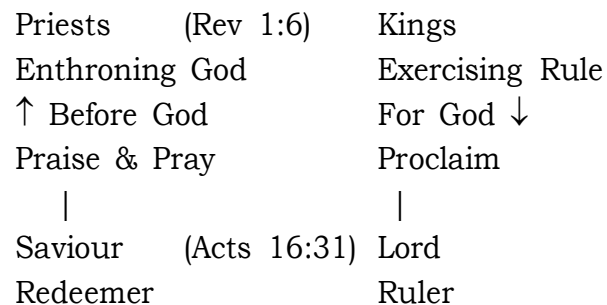
5) God's Gifts



6) God's Son — Son of God + Son of Man



7) Redemptive Blessing



Such a study is not possible without —

1. Much reading
2. Reference helps
3. Painstaking labour
4. Liberal sharing

The outcome will be ravenous rejoicing of the heart!

[illegible]

Isaiah Chapter 63

How to Hallow God's Name

Key thought: "God's Name"

v12, "An everlasting Name"

v14, "A glorious Name"

v16, "Everlasting is Your Name"

v19, "Your Name"

Involving all the 3 Persons of Godhead —

Father (v16)

Saviour, Redeemer (vv8,16b)

Holy Spirit (vv10,11,14)

"Hallowed be Your Name"

The first request in the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6:9)

How to hallow/glorify the Name of the Lord —

(1) By words of Verity and Integrity

Isa 63:8 ... *My people will not lie*

Ex 20:7 ... *Take not God's Name in vain*

Main reference to swearing (Lev 19:12)

Mt 5:33-37/Js 5:12 ... *Yes be Yes, No be No!*

(2) By a life of Purity and Honesty

Isa 63:18 ... *Your Holy people*

Rom 2:17-24 ... Walking according to the
Scriptures we profess before Heathen

Isa 52:1-5 ... God's people immersed in
Egyptian "*dust*" + "*bondage*"

Ezek 36:17-20,23-25 ... *idols ... detestable things*

(3) By submission to Authority

1 Tim 6:1,2 ... *Honour the masters ...*

God's doctrine not be blasphemed

Eph 6:5,6 ... *Obey ... as to Christ*

Col 3:22 ... *Obey ... fearing God*

Tit 2:9,10 ... *Obedience ... adorn the doctrine
of God*

(4) By acts of Kindness and Charity

Mt 5:16 ... *Your good works ... glorify God*

Isa 63:5 ... *To help ... to uphold*

:7 ... *Lovingkindness ... goodness*

:9 ... *God bore ... carried them*

:11 ... *Shepherd His flock*

Summary:

We hallow God's Name by —

1. Words of verity

2. A life of purity

3. Submission to authority

4. Acts of charity

Isaiah Chapter 64

Lessons on Revival

The entire Chapter is a prayer/plea for REVIVAL —

v1, *“Oh, that You would ...”*

There are at least 13 Lessons on Revival which we can compare with incidents in the Book of Acts —

(1) Revival comes from Heaven —

v1a, *“Oh, that You would rend the heavens!”*

Acts 2:2,3, *“Suddenly there came a sound from Heaven”*

:17,18, *“I will pour out My Spirit ...”*

(2) Revival makes God’s presence real —

v1b, *“That You would come down! That the mountains might shake at Your presence!”*

Acts 2:4... *“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit”*

:33 ... *“He poured out this which you now see and hear”*

See also 4:31 and 13:2

(3) Revival breaks the hardest of hearts and solves the most difficult of problems —

v1c, *“That the mountains might shake ...”*

Acts 9:3-6, Paul’s encounter with Jesus

“He fell to the ground ... trembling ...”

11:15-18, *“The Holy Spirit fell on them ...
God granted them repentance ...”*

(4) Revival brings victory to God’s Name and terrifies His enemies —

v2, *“To make Your name known to Your enemies ...
that the nations may tremble at Your presence”*

Acts 2:43, *“Fear came upon every soul ...*

Many signs and wonders ...”

5:5,11, *“Great fear came upon all ...”*

:24, *“They wondered what the outcome would be”*

(5) Revival days witness unexpected things —

v3, *“You did awesome things we did not look”*

Acts 2:8,12, *“How is it ...? ... amazed ... perplexed ...”*

3:9-10, *“Filled with wonder and amazement”*

5:5a,10, *“Ananias fell down... Sapphira fell down”*

(6) Revival fulfils the exceeding great promises to God’s people —

v4a, *“God acts for him who waits for Him”*

Acts 2:16,25,33,34,39,

“Spoken by Joel ... David says ... Promise of the Holy Spirit ... The promise to You ...”

(7) Revival comes to those who wait and long for it in prayer —

v4b, *“God acts for him who waits for Him”*

Acts 1:14, *“They all continued*

with one mind in prayer”

2:1, *"Day of Pentecost ... They were with
accord in one place"*

4:31, *"When they prayed ..."*

- (8)** Revival refreshes those who obey God joyfully —
v5a, *"You meet him who rejoices and does
righteousness"*

Acts 3:19,20, *"Times of refreshing"*

5:32, *"Holy Spirit given to the obedient"*

10:2,33,44,45, *"Cornelius prayed to God always
... we are present to hear ... Holy
Spirit fell on all who heard the
Word ... poured out"*

- (9)** Revival brings a deep conviction on
self-righteousness —

v5, *"We have sinned ..."*

"Our righteousness ... filthy rags ... fade as a leaf"

Acts 3:11-13, *"Jesus whom you denied ..."*

8:1-3; Phil 3:3-11, Conversion of
self-righteous Saul

- (10)** Revival awakens God's people to watchful prayer —

v7, *"Calls on Your name ... stirs himself up"*

Acts 2:42, *"They continued steadfastly in prayers"*

3:1, *"Hour of prayer"*

- (11)** Revival leads God's people to an absolute and
unquestioning surrender —

v8, *"O Lord, You are our Father ... We are clay ...
You our Potter ..."*

Acts 2:44,45, *"Sold their possessions ... distributed"*

4:32-35, *"Sold lands, houses ... distributed"*

9:6, *"Lord, what do You want me to do?"*

- (12)** Revival populates the Church —

v10, *"Holy cities ... Zion ... Jerusalem"*

Acts 2:41, *"3000 souls ..."*

4:4, *"5000 believed"*

- (13)** Revival restores joy and worship —

v11, *"Holy and beautiful Temple ... pleasant things"*

Acts 2:11, *"Speaking the wonderful works of God"*

:46,47, *"Gladness ... praising God"*

10:45, *"Gift of the Spirit poured out"*

13:2, *"Ministering to the Lord"*

16:25, *"Paul and Silas praying ... singing"*

Conclusion

We can't afford to go without a revival (Isa 64:12).

Revival is not a luxury, but a necessity!

Isaiah Chapters 65 & 66 (Part I)

Blessings unto God's Servants

- We will study Isaiah 65 and 66 together as two parts under the titles —
 - (a) God's Servants
 - (b) New Heaven & New Earth
- Who is a Servant of God?
 - Rev 19:5, *"His servants ... those who fear Him ... both small and great"*
 - :10, *"Your fellow servant ... the testimony of Jesus"*
 - Dan 6:20, *"Servant of the living God whom you serve continually"*
 - Together, a servant of God is a Worshipper, a Witness and a Worker. He need not necessarily be a fulltimer.
- God distinguishes His servants from others —
 - Mal 3:18 — The last book of the OT
 - "One who serves God and one who does not"*
 - Rev 7:2-3 — The last book of the NT
 - "Do not harm the earth until the servants of God are sealed"*

Blessings unto God's Servants

- (1)** They can stop God's judgment
- Isa 65:8, *"Do not destroy it ...
So will I do for My servants' sake"*

eg) Abraham (Gen 18:20-23)
Gardener (Lk 13:6-9)

- (2)** They enjoy mountain blessings.
- 65:9, *"My mountains ... My servants shall dwell there"*
- Mountain Blessings (Ezek 34:23-26)
Through the "Inheritor" (Eph 1:3)
Transfiguration Mount: God's servants —
Peter, James and John —
Vision, Visitors, Voice (Mk 9:1-9)
- (3)** They become full and satisfied.
- 65:13, *"My servants shall eat, drink, rejoice"*
- Joel 2:26,27, *"Eat in plenty ... Praise the Lord ...
My people never put to shame"*
- Lk 1:53-55, *"He filled the hungry with good things ...
Helped His servants"*
- (4)** They are honoured, so they rejoice.
- 65:13, *"My servants shall rejoice ... others ashamed"*
- Jn 12:26, *"If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour"*
God honours them because they die to self, and honour Him (vv24-28)
- (5)** They will sing for joy.
- 65:14, *"My servants shall sing for joy"*
Others will cry for sorrow and wail for grief

Psa 35:26-28, *"Shame and dishonour for those who magnify themselves ... The Lord has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant"*

(6) They are given another name.

65:15, *"God will call His servants by another name"*

This is because they bless or swear
"in the God of Truth" (v16)

Dan 6:20, *"Daniel, servant of the living God"*

:25,26, *"God of Daniel the living God for ever"*

(7) They have a revelation of the hand of God.

66:14, *"The hand of the Lord shall be known to His servants"*

Gen 49:22-24, *"The arms of Joseph made strong by the hands of the Mighty God"*

Isa 54:17, *"No weapon against you shall prosper ... This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord."*

i.e. The Lord's power is manifested thro' His servants.

A Call

Rejoice if you are serving Him!
Decide today if you are not!

Isaiah Chapters 65 & 66 (Part II)

New Heaven and New Earth

Isaiah 65 and 66 deal with a number of endtime events —

65:17-25

66:22,23

- + Restoration of Israel (65:18; 66:10)
- + Second Coming (66:15,16)
- + Millennium (65:25)
- + Hell (66:24)

The Millennium and other events can be considered as introduction to New Heaven and New Earth.

The blessings of NH & NE are comparable to the Blessings of New Creation in Christ —

2 Cor 5:17,18, *"If anyone is in Christ ..."*

Rom 8:23, *"We are the firstfruits of the Spirit"*
13:11, *"Now salvation nearer ..."*

(1) No more remembrance of past sins

65:17, *"I create new heavens and new earth ... the former shall not be remembered"*

2 Cor 5:19, *"Not imputing their trespasses to them"*

Heb 8:8,10-12, *"New covenant ... I will remember their sins no more"*

(2) No more crying but joy and peace

65:18,19, *"Be glad and rejoice forever in what I create ... No longer the voice of crying"*

66:12-14, *"Peace like a river ... I will comfort you ...
Your heart shall rejoice"*

Eph 2:16,17, *"Reconciled to God ... Peace"*

Jn 14:27, *"My peace I leave with you"*

15:10,11, *"My love ... My joy"*

Phil 4:7, *"Inexplicable peace of God"*

(3) No more sickness but life forever

65:20, *"Infant ... child ... one hundred years"*

Today, the *prayer of faith* (Js 5:15)

Benefit of Calvary: *"By His stripes healed"* (Isa 53:5)

(4) No more fruitlessness

65:21-23, *"Houses ... vineyards ... blessed offspring"*

Jn 4:36-38, *"Sower ... reaper ... rejoice"*

1 Cor 15:58, *"Your labour in the Lord not in vain"*

(5) No more vain prayers

65:24, *"Before they call, I will answer"*

Jn 14:13,14, *"Ask ... I will do it"*

16:24, *"Ask ... receive ... rejoice"*

1 Jn 5:13-15, *"Our confidence ... If we ask, He hears"*

(6) No more hurt or destruction

65:25, *"Wolf ... lion ... They shall not hurt
nor destroy on My holy mountain"*

Jn 10:11,12, *"Good shepherd give His life for the sheep"*
:28,29, *"No one can snatch you out of My hand
and My Father's hand"*

Heb 13:5,6, *"The Lord my Helper ...
What can man do to me?"*

(7) More and more people coming to the Lord through us

65:1, *"I was sought by those who did not ask for Me"*

66:18-23, *"They shall declare My glory among the
Gentiles ... New heavens and new earth ...
All flesh worship before Me"*

2 Cor 5:19,20 *"We are ambassadors for Christ"*

6:1,2, *"We plead with you ... Now is the day of
salvation"*

Thus,

Life in Christ is the foretaste of
life in the New Heaven and the New Earth.

The Gospel according to Matthew

Lessons on Discipleship

**Discipleship Training Camp,
Sitteri Hills, Tamilnadu, India,
20-30 May 1980**



The Gospel according to Matthew

The Old Testament is the inspired introduction to the New. The unexplained ceremonies, unachieved purposes, unappeased longings and unfulfilled prophecies of the OT are understood in the light of the NT. Fittingly the Gospel according to Matthew comes first in the New Testament. This Gospel contains the most quotes from the OT and the most references to fulfilment of prophecy. Matthew is a bridge or a gateway between the OT and the NT. There are about 60 quotations here from the OT and about 80 references to OT passages. Matthew refers to 25 of the 39 OT books. The word, “fulfilled,” occurs at least 12 times. The phrase, “That it might be fulfilled,” is so often repeated (Mt 1:22; 2:15,17,23; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14,35; 21:4; 27:9,35). This is a Gospel which can be understood only by those who have the OT. Matthew quotes from Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Hosea, Jonah, Micah, Zechariah, Malachi and several others.

Here’s a Jew writing to his fellow-Jews. The name “Matthew” means “Gift of God.” He obviously wrote to Greek-speaking Jews; that’s why he has interpreted Hebrew words like “*Emmanuel*” (1:23), “*Golgotha*” (27:33) and “*Eli, Eli, Lama sabachthani?*” (v46). He was also known as “Levi” (Mk 2:14; Lk 5:27). He was a tax-collector, a post hated by the Jews because the holder was appointed by the Romans. Being a tax-collector, he makes frequent references to currency (17:24,27; 18:24; 25:15; 26:7-9; etc). He alone records the 30 silver coins received by Judas (26:15; 27:3-10), the huge price of a

pearl (13:45,46), miraculous provision of tax-money from the mouth of a fish (17:24-27), payment to labourers (20:1-16), the Parable of Talents (25:14-30) and the bribing of soldiers (28:12,13). While listing the names of the twelve disciples, Matthew mentions the former profession only for him as “tax-collector” (10:2-4). Written a few years after the Resurrection of Christ, references to the Temple suggest the date of this Gospel as to be the middle of the first century, between AD 50 and 65. The Church Fathers, according to their inspired guidance, placed it as the first of the four Gospels.

Praise God for the four Gospels as four pillars of truth concerning the Person of Christ. The original readers of Matthew were Jews, those of Mark were Romans, those of Luke were Greeks, and John was meant to be for the whole world. Matthew wrote as a Teacher, Mark as a Preacher, Luke as a Historian, and John as a Theologian. Matthew mostly contains sermons, Mark has miracles, Luke has parables, and John is full of doctrines. In other words, Matthew is predominantly the Teachings of Christ, Mark His works, Luke His parables and John His conversations.

One Gospel supplements the other three. Nothing is a complete story but a complete revelation of the Person of Christ. We meet Jesus the King in Matthew’s Gospel, the Servant in Mark, the Son of Man in Luke, and the Son of God in John. This is comparable to the Portrait of Christ in Ezekiel 1:10 and Revelation 4:7. The lion-like face paints Him as a King, the ox-like as a Servant, the

man-like as the perfect Man, and the eagle-like as the mighty God. These correspond respectively to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. One of the prophetic pictures of Jesus is the “Branch.” “Behold, the King!” (Jer 23:5). This is Matthew’s emphasis. “Behold, My Servant!” (Zech 3:8). This is Mark’s emphasis. “Behold, the Man!” (6:12). This is Luke’s emphasis. “Behold, the Lord (God)!” (Isa 4:2; 11:1,2). This is John’s emphasis.

Matthew, Mark and Luke are called Synoptic Gospels and they stress the humanity of Christ, whereas John stresses His deity. The first three are called “synoptic” because they together present Christ from a similar point of view, whereas John is a “supplementary” Gospel which presents Him from a different viewpoint. Both Matthew and Luke begin their Gospels with the genealogy of Christ. Matthew’s genealogy begins with Abraham (1:1) whereas Luke’s genealogy carries the Messianic line as far as Adam (Lk 3:38). Because Jesus is presented as King in Matthew’s Gospel, His genealogy is traced to King David (Mt 1:6). Several kings are named in this genealogy but only David is explicitly given the title, “King.” This is to mean that the “Son of David” would be the King of kings! Matthew refers to Christ as the “Son of David” seven times (1:1; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30; 21:9; 22:42). In order to emphasize the virgin birth of Jesus, Matthew writes that Mary, not Joseph, begot Jesus! (1:16). For all others, it is fathers who begot! Matthew concludes his genealogy counting neatly three 14 generations (1:17). In Hebrew language the numerical value of the letters composing the name “David” is 14 (e.g. A=1, B=2, C=3,

etc.) This system is called “*gematria*.” Thus Matthew’s artistic arrangement highlights Jesus’ Davidic lineage! Genesis opens with the genealogy of the “first Adam” (Gen 5:1), and Matthew with that of the “second Adam” (Mt 1:1; 1 Cor 15:45).

The 7 great facts of the Life of Christ are adequately presented in this Gospel: Incarnation, Inauguration, Temptation, Transfiguration, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension. The 5 discourses by Jesus are the backbone of this book (Ch 5-7; 10; 13; 18; 24-25). Each ends with the statement, “When Jesus has finished these sayings” (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). These 5 discourses together may be called, “A Manual or DISCIPLESHIP.”

Discourse 1: How should the citizens of the Kingdom live? (Ch 5-7)

Discourse 2: How should the travelling disciples conduct themselves? (Ch 10)

Discourse 3: What Parables did Jesus tell? (Ch 13)

Discourse 4: What are the warnings against hindering entrance into the Kingdom? (Ch 18)

Discourse 5: How will human history end? (Ch 24-25)

The Sermon on the Mount may be called Christ’s inaugural speech. It begins with 8 Beatitudes (5:2-10). The word, “Beatitude”, comes from old French, “*Beatitude*” or Latin, “*Beatitudo*” or “*Beatus*,” meaning “Blessed.” In this Sermon is a call for making right choices: Narrow or broadway (7:13,14); True or false prophets (vv15-23); Sandy or rocky foundation (vv24-27). This is more a

“Teaching” than a “Sermon.” The opening statement: “He opened His mouth and taught them saying ...” (5:2). The closing verse: “The people were astonished at His teaching” (7:28,29). He gave verbal expression of His authority in “teaching,” and visual expression in “miracles” (7:28,29; 8:16,17). Memorizing this Sermon and keeping it in our hearts will save us from many a temptation (Psa 119:11). Mahatma Gandhi the Father of our Nation has said, “No Hindu is complete without reading the Sermon on the Mount!” Jesus was a balanced Teacher. To start with, He spoke of “blessedness” (Mt 5), and towards the end it was “woefulness” (Mt 23).

Matthew’s Gospel is called the Gospel of the Kingdom as it presents Jesus as the King. The word, “Kingdom,” occurs over 50 times. The words, “Kingdom of Heaven,” occur only in this Gospel and 33 times. “Kingdom of God,” 4 times. “Kingdom of Heaven” and “Kingdom of God” are interchangeably used in the Gospels (Mt 3:2 vs. Mk 1:14,15). Jesus is frequently called a King in Matthew (2:2; 21:5; 22:11; 25:34; 27:11,37,42). We are called to seek “first” the Kingdom of God! (6:33).

This Gospel is truly a Missionary Gospel. Matthew brings in several non-Jews in his narrative: Wise men from the East (2:1), a Centurion from the Roman army (8:5), a Canaanite woman (15:21,22). He includes in Jesus’ genealogy several women whose stories might raise eyebrows, and kings of dubious moral character to prove that “Jesus did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (9:13b). The Great Commission is

in full form here (28:18-20). The word “Church” occurs only in Matthew (16:18; 18:17). The missionary warfare against the “gates of hell” finds a place in this Gospel (16:18). The Great Commission in 28:18-20 includes both planting of Churches and perfecting of Churches: (a) “Make disciples,” (b) “Teach them.” The “end will come” when the entire world is evangelised (24:14).

The 20 Parables in Matthew’s Gospel (8 in Chapter 13 and 3 in Chapters 21 and 22) teach us practical lessons on Personal Soulwinning, Neighbourhood Evangelism and Frontier Missions. Matthew is the first person to leave an office in order to follow Jesus and become a fulltimer in the Kingdom work (Lk 5:27,28). Because he “left all,” he had no problem to record Jesus’ demand for radical discipleship. He alone records Peter’s question: “We have left all ... What shall we get?” (Mt 19:27). This was following a parable on riches (vv23-26). Matthew was a very social person. He honoured Jesus with a “great feast” inviting his former colleagues obviously to introduce Messiah to them! (Lk 5:29). We teach Missionary trainees, “Friendship is a prelude to Fellowship!”

Addressing a Jewish audience, Jesus predicted, “The Kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it” (Mt 21:43). He also said, “Many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven. But the sons of the Kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness” (8:11,12). See how the missionary purpose of

God unfolds in this Gospel! With this background I led the following two programmes travelling through this Gospel —

(a) Discipleship Training Camp (DTC)

This was a 10-day residential programme with about 60 men and women, mostly youngsters, up the Sitteri Hills, Tamilnadu, 20-30 May 1980. This is the first mission station of the Blessing Youth Mission (BYM). Read the combined testimony of the participants on pages 24-28 which appeared in the 1980 May-June issue of the *Blessing* magazine.

(b) Young Leaders Training Camp (YLTC)

This was a 5-day residential programme for born-again men and women in the age group of 20 to 30, aimed at raising next generation of leaders for the Indian Church, 26-30 Dec 1993. The venue was again the Sitteri Hills. There were 150 delegates from among students, layleaders and fulltime workers of several Churches and Ministries. The main sessions were led by me in which I taught lessons on Leadership primarily from Matthew's Gospel. Mr. Y. Paul Dinakaran, Mr. A. Lionel, Dr. M. Arthur John and Dr. Lilian Stanley handled the other sessions. The Outlines of the Lessons I taught are on pages 215-255. The group photo of the programme is on page 214.

In conclusion let me add one observation from Matthew's Gospel. The first Chapter and the last Chapter present Jesus as the "Immanuel," GOD WITH US! (1:23; 28:20b). What more do we want?

Lessons on Discipleship from Matthew's Gospel

Mt 5:1 — The first mentioning of the word "disciple" in the NT.

"His disciples came unto Him" ... "unto a mountain"
This is the most important aspect of discipleship —
"Going unto the Master"

The first recorded act of the disciples in Mark also emphasizes this truth —

Mk 1:35-37

"Simon and those with him followed after Jesus who had departed into a solitary place"

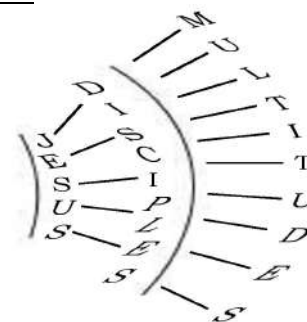
Matthew 5:1 — Unto Jesus the Teacher

Mark 1:35-37 — Unto Jesus the Intercessor

Christianity is a relationship with 2-dimensions:
— Vertical
— Horizontal
"Unto Jesus" to get trained in both.

Sermon on the Mount

Mt 5:1



Compare Mt 5:1,2
with 7:28

The Jesus' method of reaching the people or the world is
“through disciples”

The significance of being a disciple!

The Call responded to:

4:19-22

(1) Immediate Obedience “Immediately”
Straightaway

(2) Total Obedience

— Involving leaving —

Hindrances for
Discipleship

- (i) secular ties (nets) (9:9)
- (ii) material gains (ship)
- (iii) family bindings (father)
(Mt 8:21,22)
- (iv) influence of colleagues & friends
(Mk 1:20) (hired servants)

(3) Christ-centred Obedience
“*followed Him*”

8:23-26 — Fear rebuked.
Boldness demanded.
Trying circumstances permitted.
“*Little faith*” not sufficient.

While appreciating the “great faith” of the Centurion,
He mainly addressed His followers, the disciples (v10)

9:10-13 — The necessity for “mixing up” with the
sinners. The purpose is soulwinning.
Separation and not seclusion.

Every soulwinner is a physician and every sinner
a patient (v12)

Possibility of becoming too heavenly-minded
(*“sacrifice”*) to be of any earthly use (*“mercy”*) (v13)

This is an important truth to be “learnt” by “going”
into the people (v13)

v10 — The attractive (wooing) presence (personality)
of Christ.

Physician — To deal with (a) Publicans (v10)
(b) Pharisees (v11)

i.e. both with the interested enquirers and the
skeptic religionists.

— The “regular” group a soulwinner should minister unto.

“*Calling sinners to repentance*” — (v13)
the ministry of a disciple (soulwinner)

v35 — Three fields for ministry

- i) Cities — Urban
- ii) Villages — Rural
- iii) Synagogues — Religious

vv36-38 The missionary burden of Christ was shared
first with the disciples.

Challenge One:

"Follow Me, I'll make you fishers of men" (4:19)

Challenge Two:

"Pray that labourers may be sent" (9:38)

Challenge Three:

"Go to freely give" (10:6-8)

Challenge Four:

"Learn of Me" (11:29)

10:2 — The disciples now commissioned as apostles.

Only a disciple can become an apostle.

This is Number 1 ministry in the Church
(Eph 4:11; 1 Cor 12:28)

Disciples	≡	Apostles	≡	Sent-forth	labourers
10:1		10:2		10:5	9:38

The entire chapter of **Matthew 10** contains many practical counsel for apostolic discipleship —

vv7,8 — The nature of ministry
"Deliverance"

vv9-11 — The needs met.
"Dependence" on the Lord.

vv12,13 — House visitation
A spirit of blessing the people.

vv14,15 — Response — Rejection

vv16-20 — Wisdom, Discretion

↑
(Clean wisdom) Js 3:17

vv21-25 — Persecution
Misunderstanding.
(Impossible to please men, 11:16-19)

vv26-33 — Bold Testimony.
No fear.

vv34-37 — Family problems.
Oppositions.
Discouragements.

vv38,39 — Sacrifice of self.
Laying down the comforts.
Accepting the hard path.

vv40-42 — Blessing unto the supporters.
Assure them of the heavenly reward.
Encourage them to support hence.

11:1 — All that Christ gave His disciples in Matthew 10 are commandments and not just counsel or just suggestions.

— The 12 apostles are again called as disciples here. i.e. The basic calling is unto discipleship, and apostleship is the ministry.

End of chapter 9 — "Labour" (Reaping)

End of chapter 10 — "Reward" unto the supporters

End of chapter 11 — "Rest" unto the labourers

12:1-4 — Jesus defends His disciples when they were accused of plucking the corn on the sabbath by the Pharisees.

Lesson: A team leader should protect and defend the members of the team — of course, legitimately. They should stand together in the public eye.

vv17-21 — A soft, gentle and meek spirit should be the badge of the evangelistic Teams which go to the Gentiles.

vv46-50 — The leaders should have an owning relationship with the members of the team (v49)

13:10,11 — The necessity to use illustrations while ministering to the multitudes (v2) — Simple language, etc.

vv28-30 — Don't be in a hurry! Quickness is good, but hastiness is dangerous in Christian ministry.

↑
This parable was more important to the disciples than the remaining six (In this chapter of parables — v3 & 53 — there are 7 parables), because the disciples asked the Lord the meaning of this parable only (v36). Hence the importance of this truth.

14:19 — Jesus → Disciples → Multitude

Lesson: The simple sermons you have prepared (5 loaves + 2 fish) should be given to the Lord (in prayer) (vv17,18) and let Him bless it and anoint it. Then serve it to people.

Steps in preparing a sermon —

- a) Understand the mind of the Holy Spirit.
- b) Surrender to Him the contents you have prepared.
- c) Serve it to people after His blessing of it.

14:22,23 — The leader of the Team should pray much more than the members. Only then he can help his team in times of trouble and crisis (vv24,25)

Also to BE ALONE!

A leader should be a guide also. He can do so only if he waits on the Lord to hear Him.

15:2; 12:2 — Being found fault is the lot of every disciple of Christ.

In both the instances we find the Lord defending His disciples.

Lesson: Leave it to the Lord.

At the same time, we should be very careful lest we offend others. In both these instances, the disciples could have avoided it. Both were concerning food.

The Law and Traditions (good ones) should not bind us but we should learn to respect them.

16:5 — The problem of forgetting

Tips to avoid forgetting —

1. Proper planning (Plan)
2. Noting down (Notebook)
3. Checking up (Check)

16:9,10 — God's mysterious ways of working.

5 loaves → 5000 men + 12 baskets

7 loaves → 4000 men + 7 baskets

It may not suit any of our logical calculations.

God operates altogether on a different plane.

16:6,12 — The disciples were warned against the doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Beware of False Doctrines!

Elements of the Doctrine of Pharisees and Sadducees —

16:13-20

The Earthly

The Heavenly

REIGN

1. Son of man (v13) Son of the Living God (v16)

REVELATION

2. Flesh & blood (v17) Father in Heaven (v17)

RELATIONSHIP

3. Church (v18) Kingdom of Heaven (v19)

REACH

4. Earth (v19) Heaven (v19)

REDEMPTION

5. Jesus (v20) The Christ (v20)

RESURRECTION

6. Killed (v21) Raised (v21)

Jesus wanted His disciples to understand these two aspects of the things of God. His question had the phrase, "the Son of Man," but He appreciated Peter's answer which said, "Son of the Living God."

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 7. Men (v23) | God (v23) |
| 8. World (v26) | Soul (v26) |
| 9. Lose here (v25) | Find there (v25) |
| 10. Works (v27) | Reward (v27) |

Lessons for the disciples —

The condition (v24) ...

1. Deny yourself
2. Take up the cross
3. Follow Jesus

Meditate on these three steps.

For example: "Deny yourself" —

Saying "NO" to ourselves.

Giving way to others.

eg) Abraham/Lot (Gen 13:8,9)

A must for Teamwork.

17:1-9 Lessons for those disciples who are privileged to enter the secret chambers of the Lord for special seasons of revelation and fellowship —

- (1) Hold your tongue (v4; Mk 9:6)
(Eccl 5:1-3)

- (2) Lose not the preeminence of Christ in the excitement of the glory of the experience (vv2-5,8).
(All experiences are to lead to a fuller knowledge of the Person of Christ)
- (3) Be regulated in sharing with others the secret experiences you have with God (v9)

vv14-21 The secret of power for the disciples —

Basic

- (1) Faith—Unbelief to be dealt with

Reinforcements

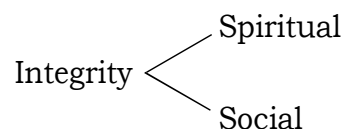
- (2) Prayer
- (3) Fasting — Self-denial implied

That is —

- (1) A life with the Scriptures
- (2) A life of Supplications
- (3) A life of Self-denial (or Sacrifice)

v19 Public ministry should be followed up by seasons of private discourse with the Lord.

vv24-27 Failure to fulfil social obligations by the disciples will be a stumbling block to the outsiders.



18:1-3 Conversion for the Disciples —

To result in the following:

- (1) Humbling (v4)
- (2) Receiving (v5)
- (3) Not offending (v6)
- (4) Not despising (v10)
- (5) Reconciling — The procedure
(vv15-17,21,22)

Illustration: (vv23-35)

Be considerate.

Be moderate.

- (6) Agreeing in prayer and other efforts
— sincerely (vv18-20)

19:13-15 Very unfortunate — When the disciples forget so quickly what the Lord has taught them.
(cf. Ch. 18 — lessons on children)

vv27-29 Our service of sacrifice and self-denial will be duly rewarded.

20:7 “No man has hired us”
↑ This should never be our excuse.

vv18-21 Personal ambitions obstruct our vision of the suffering Saviour and prevent us from fellowshiping in His suffering.

How sad they were concerned about their chairs while the Lord was preparing Himself for the Cross!

v24 We should tolerate the silly ambitions of the fellow members lest there be a division of Two vs. Ten in Twelve!

There was division even in the inner cell of the Trio!

Peter vs. James + John

vv26-28 What is Christian ministry?
 It is serving ← “*servant*”
 and sacrificing ← “*give life*”

21:21 “Say to this mountain”

In the course of the ministry we will meet such mountains to which we should speak and then take the matter to God in believing prayer.
 (v22) Result →

Against the Enemy → a) “It shall be done”
 From the Lord → b) “You shall receive”

“Command” the enemy		The two aspects of our
“Ask” the Lord		supernatural ministry

Both are interconnected.
 Well illustrated in Ephesians 6:20.

vv10-17 — Against the Enemy ← To resist
 vv18-20 — Unto the Lord. ← To receive
“utterance may be given, etc.”

Resist and Receive!

22:15,16

Marks of a good Teacher —

- (1) Be true.
- (2) Teach the Way of God in Truth.
- (3) Care not for any man.
 (Be impartial. Please not men.)

v29 Cause of Error — twofold —

- (1) Lack of knowledge of the WORD OF GOD
- (2) Lack of experience of the POWER OF GOD

A leader must be mighty in both —

- eg)
 - (1) Stephen (Acts 6:8)
 - (2) Moses (Acts 7:22)
 - (3) Barnabas (Acts 11:24)
 - (4) Apollos (Acts 18:24,25)

These are the two things the Bible wants us to be filled with —

- (1) Be filled with the Spirit ...
“speaking” (Eph 5:18,19)
- (2) Be filled with the Scriptures
“teaching and admonishing” (Col 3:16)

23:1-12 Beware of clerical titles!

vv13-33 Beware of hypocrisy!

24:42-46 3-fold preparedness for Christ’s coming

- 1) Watchfulness
- 2) Faithfulness
- 3) Occupation

26:6-8 A lesson the disciples did not learn —
 WORSHIP more important than WORK.

Ch 26 is filled with the failures of the disciples —

1. Betrayal by a disciple (v21)
2. Non-cooperation from disciples (vv36-46)
3. Fleshly methods (vv51-55)
4. Forsaking their Master (v56). Fear.
5. Denial (vv58,69-75)

Seven Spiritual Objectives: (Selected)

The disciples must be —

1. Men of the Book
2. Men of prayer
3. Men of faith
4. Men of separated walk
5. Men who witness
6. Men of compassionate heart
7. Men who give

Memory Portions

Mt 9:35-10:1	—	Go and Send!
10:16-22	—	Persecution
:32-39	—	Self-denial
18:15-20	—	Reconciliation and Strength of Unity
21:21,22	—	Power of faith
24:42-46	—	Watchfulness
28:18-20	—	Great Commission
Rom 10:9-15	—	Plan for World Evangelism
1 Cor 9:22-27	—	Temperance
2 Cor 2:14-17	—	Savour unto the Lord

Testimony of a participant of the Discipleship Training Camp (1980)

“And Jesus went about all the cities ... and Jesus went about all the cities ... and ...” Uh! What? A damaged LP record? Oh no! The Disciples (from the bald man to the beardless youth) **memorising** from the pages of the Holy Bible! This was Discipleship Training in a nutshell, training us in areas we were resigned as “impossible.” Reflecting on those days up the hills, we did not live in Sitteri for “10 days” but “3½ years” in Galilee, attentive to the exhortations of Jesus to His disciples, auscultating from the pages of Matthew. And all of us bore Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. Under the sapphire sky, on the emerald scape, the golden sunlight scintillating through the porous pandal with an occasional cuckoo of the birds came His voice clear and vivid descending on our hearts like dew drops. “Follow Me ... Pray ... Go ... Learn ... Beware ... Watch ... Take up the cross ... Deny yourself ... Sacrifice ...” It was a scene of disciples getting converted.

The programme started on the 20th of May 1980. We endured the jactant jaunt up the hills in the jouncing jig-jag vehicle called “bus!” The pleasant cool breeze and drizzle of Sitteri wiped off all weariness, and the hail stones spread like jasmines on the grass (a rare sight) assured us of the awaiting manna. The programme was strenuous but the novelty gave it a feather touch. The strict and serious tone of the morning classes would soften down during the afternoon assignments and end up in a rocking laughter in the night. Brother Stanley was our teacher and trainer.

Many confessed that they were not used to arising at 5 am. Some even objected quoting “weakness.” But all did get up and were thankful for the training which proved that “weakness” was the lie of the devil which could be overcome by Pauline self-discipline. The 6 to 7.30 dawn devotion in the natural setting took us close to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in a holy communion.

Bathing without a bathroom and that in a spring was a wonderful experience. Breakfast was often “*sundal*” (pulses). Somehow we gulped it. Why, even the disciples of Jesus when they were hungry had to satisfy themselves with raw grains from the field! Lunch was often a colourful, gaylooking, juicy, lazy, easy, unpleasant surprise. I mean a collection of uncooked vegetables — two lady’s fingers, four tomatoes, a coconut piece, two carrots and an onion. None of us ever thought this would be enough to take us through 10 to 15 kilometres of outreach up and down the rocky hills. But we were outwitted. A good lesson indeed! Hereafter we will not worry about lunch packets for outreach nor Sunday lunch.

During the class hours, as we read through Matthew’s Gospel, our eyes opened wide at the new-found truths on discipleship. It was as if the disciples and Jesus enacted the long-loved history once again for us. The scenes of disciples with Jesus sitting and eating with sinners, walking up the mountain, apart into the wilderness, sailing over the seas, screaming in the storm, fumbling in the Mount of Transfiguration and the tall youthful commanding figure of Jesus smiling, laughing, chiding, correcting, consoling came

alive before us. The sheepish grin of the disciples, exposed of their follies, stripped of their haloes encouraged us to climb up to Apostolic discipleship. But we were cut to the core by the two-edged Sword and bent on our knees with a penitent heart.

Beautiful team spirit was developed by working up the allotted assignments. Under the trees or in a ploughed field. Sitting in a circle, all would contribute towards the building up of the topic. Competitions sparked the enthusiasm. Thanks be to God, the men and women teams proved to be equal, quenching the 'who-should-be-the greatest' spirit. For otherwise in all possibility one would have commanded fire down from heaven, and consumed the other even as Elias did!

The outreaches unearthed the unrecognised physical stamina in us. All were puffing and panting, drained of the last drop of energy. But when one collapsed all the rest forgot their own infirmities and ran to the member's rescue. One wiped the face, one poured water and another fanned to revive the fainting soul.

What better manifestation could there be of the Body-of-Christ concept in team life! As we walked through the forest in torchlight, the poisonous creatures would have wondered why the Lord who always let them loose bound their mouths suddenly. Had they known the history of Daniel they would have understood. The outreaches instilled in us a burning passion to win the tribals for the Lord. Are we not debtors both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise?

We expectantly looked forward to the evenings, for everyday was different. One day it was a sauntering to the top of a rocky hill. Another day it was a long discourse with the Father. Upright on the knees, entranced in praise and adoration for two hours at a stretch. This was another discovery of our potential.

Night came and with it a nonsensical mirth. The light programme helped us get over our sulky moods due to punishments, impositions and such humiliations. After all, isn't it years since we "stood" on benches and desks? We felt so awkward to stand up or kneel down in front of the whole class. (Of course more than half the class would be goats). But we successfully camouflaged the shame.

One batch enacted the scene of Philip's house with four prophetesses and Agabu warning Paul, adapted to modern days. The other batch, James and John striving for the left and right sides of Jesus. The keen sense of humour of the participants evoked profuse ha-ha's, ho-ho's. The camp-fire was the most memorable, blending us all one in the spirit.

The most embarrassing time was that of recitation of memory portions. 5 to 8 verses a day! But memorise, we did it! And testimonies of trainees reveal that a large percentage have decided to make it their regular habit.

In short the Discipleship Training Camp has catalysed in us an urge to subject ourselves to day-to-day self-discipline especially in the areas of sleep, food, devotion, memorising and rigorous labour. We learnt to adapt ourselves to adverse circumstances. Mornings would always greet us with empty buckets and try our patience. But the

trial worked patience, and patience experience, so that we could with Paul say, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." We testify to a significant change in our team life for the better. Many of our false notions concerning team life were removed or corrected, and we were dehaloed of our leadership-ado because we learnt that God makes disciples of those who are master-mistakers!

At the close we signed a covenant to sleep not more than 6 hours a day unless forced to. (See a few signatures below). We resolved to get the maximum out of life and pour it as a sweet-smelling savour unto the Lord!

(Continued on the next page).



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 J. Isaac Varadan R. Sugandhi
 S.P. Thimmarasu
 Danayanthi K. Arathi George
 S. S. Sureshnan
 Mrs Annie Rajamoni
 Mrs. Dora Ratna Raj
 A. Mary Periyal

(Continued from page 211)

As we parted in and got on the bus (some 15 brothers had to sit on the top of the bus; such is the primitive condition existing there) our hearts were bubbling over with blessing for the blessed soil that it may become a Treasure Island of Truths.

Had we a Time Machine, we would have jumped into it and accelerated it to 2000 June, to shake hands with the Sitteri Discipleship graduates, emerging from the Blessing Hill, and congratulate them, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that you see; for many have desired to see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them."

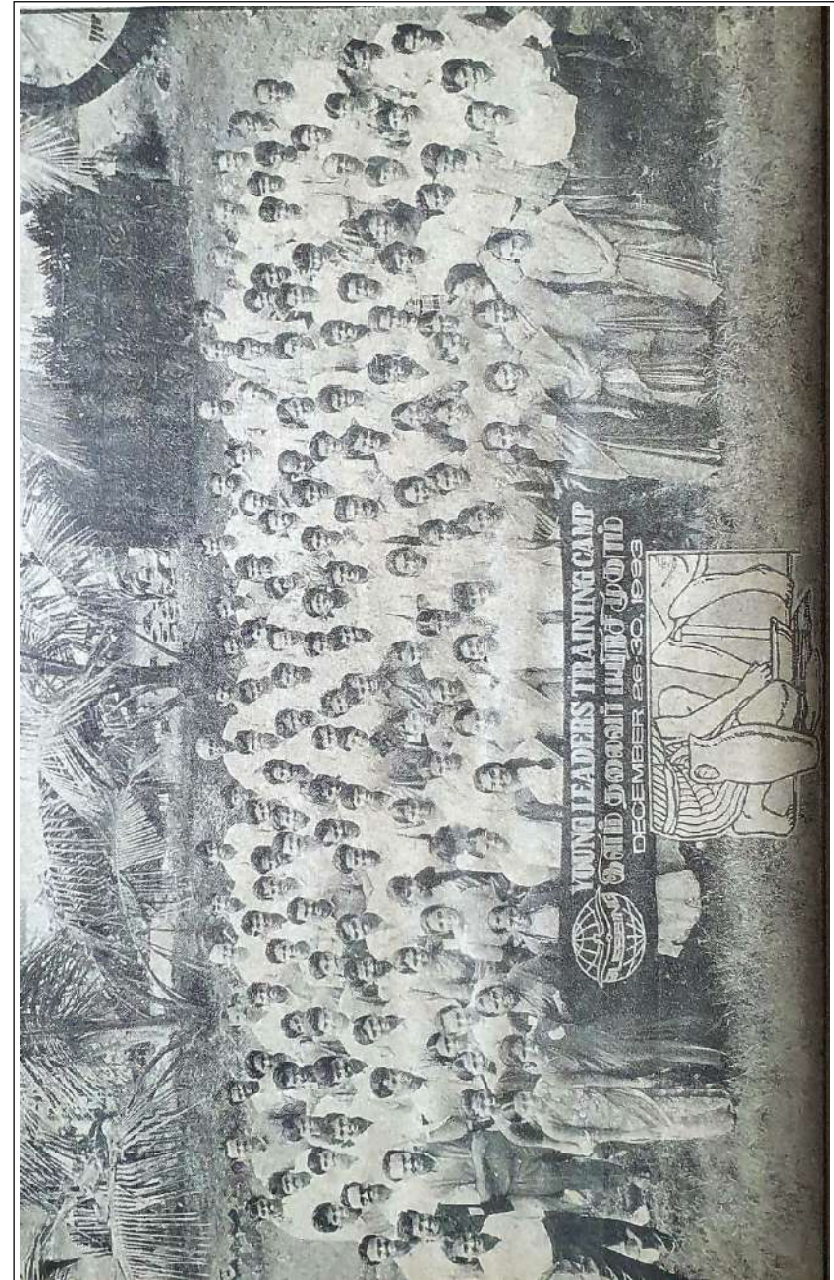
"Lord, make them and the places round about Your hill a blessing; and cause the shower to come down in his season; Let there be showers of blessing!"

— A disciple

The Gospel according to Matthew

Lessons on Leadership

**Taught in the
Young Leaders Training Camp,
Sitteri Hills, Tamilnadu, India,
26-30 December 1993**



(The Author was the Photographer!)

Lessons on Leadership from Matthew's Gospel

(Read pages 185-191 for an Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew.)

3:13-15 ... The very first thing Jesus does, when He begins His public ministry, is to show that He is under authority — of the Father.

Every leader should begin here.

This is what pleases the Father (v17).

He shows this authority of the Father again by referring to Him throughout the temptations as “GOD” and not FATHER (4:4,7,10)

4:1 ... *Jesus was led by the Spirit*

He is under the AUTHORITY of the Father,
and the LEADERSHIP of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit in our lives (Rom 8:14)

The daily prayer of a leader should be Psalm 143:10.

The leading of the Spirit to Jesus was through —

- a) An inner urge (Mt 4:1/Lk 4:1)
- b) Circumstances (Mt 4:12)
(Jn 3:25,26/4:1-3)
- c) The Scriptures (Mt 4:13-16)
- d) The Father's Commission (Lk 4:42-44)

4:17-19 ... From the very beginning of His ministry, Jesus was recruiting and training others.

For 2 reasons — (Mk 3:14)

- a) For companionship in His work
- b) For the continuation of His work

Ch 5,6,7 — The Kingdom standard for a leader.

This Sermon was primarily addressed
to His disciples (Mt 5:1,2/Lk 6:20)

Every leader should frequently meditate on these Kingdom principles and values lest he unconsciously imbibes the spirit of the world and gets into the mould of the ungodly system.

Here's a selected Table of Contrasts between the Kingdom values and human values —

□ The Beatitudes ...

	<u>Kingdom Values</u>	<u>Human Values</u>
1. <i>Poor in spirit</i>	Self-abasement Humility Dependence on God Reliance on God's Word	Self-esteem Self-confidence Self-sufficiency Self-reliance
2. <i>Mourn</i>	Sensitivity to personal weaknesses Concern for others Contriteness Desire to forgive and be forgiven	Pleasure Personal comfort Entertainment Self-justification
3. <i>Meek</i>	Courtesy	Pride

	Obedience to God Willingness to serve Gentleness	Power Self-importance Prestige
4. <i>Hunger for righteousness</i>	Desire to grow Moral purity Self-control Self-denial	Self-satisfaction Personal freedom Material success Moral relativity
5. <i>Merciful</i>	Compassion Generosity Forgiveness	Self-righteousness Personal rights Vengeance
6. <i>Pure in heart</i>	Moral sensitivity Separation from worldliness Integrity	Cosmopolitan attitude Sophistication Broadmindedness
7. <i>Peacemakers</i>	Social concern Justice Reconciliation	Competition Defensiveness Assertiveness
8. <i>Persecuted because of righteousness</i> Endurance	Involvement in doing good Popularity Dedication Loyalty	Ability to compromise “Don’t-rock-the-boat” Opportunism

(From the Applied Dictionary of the Bible, Kingsway)

Of the 8 Beatitudes the first and the last speak of “*Kingdom*” (= leadership, rule) — Both speak of the “*heart*” (1 Sam 16:7)

The Kingdom x The World:

Jn 18:36 — eg) Paul teaches this principle to the young leader Timothy (1 Tim 6:9-13)

|

Paul exhorts Timothy not to follow the trend of the world, but resist the tide

“*But you ...*”

1 Tim 6:11/2 Tim 3:10,14; 4:5

8:5-10 The Centurion’s son healed.

“*I am under authority ...*”

Good followers make good leaders (1 Pet 5:5-7)

8:18-22 • Discourages empty enthusiasm (vv19,20)

• Discourages delayed obedience (vv21,22)
(Wrong priorities)

↑ What a leader should avoid.

9:35 (4:23) — Jesus was an active Worker.

A lazy and disorganized person does not make a good leader.

Jesus was constantly driven by a sense of urgency.

- The harvest is wasting (Jn 4:35)
- The night is coming (Jn 9:4)

A proper combination of “devotion” and “discipline”

A man who has not disciplined himself cannot discipline others. One of the main reasons why several fall out of missionary work is not that they lack gifts, but they are never disciplined.

Ch 10 — Jesus commissions the apostles.
“What to do and what not to do”

Seven ingredients of an apostolic ministry:

1. Power (vv1,8,20)
2. Faith (vv9,10) —

An element of uncertainty is necessary.

3. Wisdom (v16)
4. Sincerity (vv16b)
5. Boldness (vv17-19,28-31)
6. Self-denial (vv37,38)
7. Perseverance (v22b)

11:16-19 A leader can never please all the people.
A leader can never please anyone always.

11:28-30 Jesus as a leader:

- 1) An Enabler ... *"I will give you rest"*
- 2) An Educator ... *"Learn from Me"*
- 3) An Example ... *"I am gentle and lowly"*

— Though “*all things had been delivered to Him by the Father ...*” (v27)

- No one should feel condemned or dejected under a leader (12:18-21). This is the responsibility of the leader.

The ministry of a leader is to —

- + build people, not break them (12:20)
- + quicken people, not quench them (12:20)
- + enable people, not exhaust them (11:28,30)
- + teach people, not tease them (11:29)
- + uphold people, not undermine them (12:18b,20b)

He won't easily be discouraged (Isa 42:4)

- He is an optimist; people would “*trust*” such a leader! (Mt 12:21)

Talk less, work more! (12:18-21)

Unlike the modern politicians, Jesus fulfilled His mission rather than boasting about His manifesto.

Beware of imitating the politicians!

Newspapers, cheap magazines —

Don't allow them to corrupt you.

12:46-50 The new identity of a leader.

He is all out to build and promote the causes of His associates, rather than His own family members.

(See also 10:34-36)

How sad that most of today's leaders are primarily concerned about the promotion and wellbeing of their own family members!

13:1,3 The power behind the parables of Jesus was His own example!

He was a missionary, not just a visionary!

↑ ↑
(vision and task) (vision without task)

The parables, examples, illustrations, etc, which Jesus used in His teaching tell us about His keen sense of observation —

Look at the birds.
Consider the lilies.
Sower, seed, soils
Sea, fish, net
Old cloth and new piece
Old and new wineskins
Sheep and shepherd
Pearls and businessmen
Light on the lightstand
City on a hill
Cleaning of vessels
Selling of sparrows

Don't be confined to homes and halls.
Go open air.
Be in touch with nature.
Read general books also.

13:54-58 Don't be discouraged by the indifference of your relatives, friends and neighbours.

14:13 ... Jesus withdrew to be alone
— following a sad news

:23 ... Jesus withdrew to be alone
— following a great miracle

Such withdrawals keep us from
depressions and self-exaltation
(a) (deflation) (b) (inflation)

These (a) and (b) are the two most powerful tools of Satan against leaders. Retreating into the presence of God protects them from these.

15:1-6 Jesus valued the 5th commandment very much. A leader who does not honour his parents cannot expect honour from others (Eph 6:1-3)

Upto His 30th year, Jesus was in His home at Nazareth (Lk 2:51/3:23)

Those who don't learn obedience, submission, etc, at home don't make good leaders.
Because, home is our first college.
Though the home situation may not be perfect and ideal for some, one must take advantage of the positive sides/aspects.

If you are married, that again presents the best opportunity to learn love, obedience, submission, authority, etc.

Eph 5:22-28,32-33 (Husband-Wife)
6:1-4 (Parents-Children)

Failure here means failure in leadership in the ministry (1 Tim 3:4,5)

15:14 Blind leaders of the blind!
Embrace good traditions but eschew the meaningless (vv3,6,10-12)

Neither be too conservative nor too liberal.
Truth is more important than traditions.
Be flexible!

Blessed are the flexible;
for they shall not be broken!

Quake-proof buildings — Foundation & Flexibility.
In general, Southern Christians are more conservative
and closed than their northern counterparts.

Almost all the disciples of Jesus came from Galilee, not
Judea. Life in “*Galilee of the nations*” was much more
cosmopolitan than in exclusive Jerusalem. The minds of
Galileans were much more open to new ideas than that
of the Jerusalemites.

Develop a pleasant tolerance in this pluralistic society.

16:5,6 ... Jesus was witty. He had a sense of humour!

Don't be too serious.
Be a jolly good fellow.
There should be enough laughter in every team.
Controlling laughter when someone cracks a joke is
not a sign of maturity.
Look at all the Indian group photo and compare them
with those from the West. We stand frozen!

Acts of humour! (Jn 21:5,10-12)

When leaders are too serious and stiff,
they cannot attract young people.

Be natural. Don't lose it.
Don't kill religion.

16:13-19 Growth in the knowledge of the Person of
Christ is the foundation and key to leadership.

Growth in this knowledge means increase in
strength and stability —

Simon = Reed (v17)

Peter = Rock (v18)

The reed-man became a rock-man!

Eph 1:17-19

Phil 3:7,8

Jesus: “*Who do you say that I am?*”

— The answer to this question gives us the
standard for life and ministry.

eg) In the area of leadership: What a leader should be

+ *I AM the Way.*

— Be an Example (1 Tim 4:12)

+ *I AM the Light.*

— Be an Enlightener.

+ *I AM the Bread.*

— Be an Edifier

+ *I AM the Vine.*

— Be an Enabler (Vine → Branches)

+ *I AM the Shepherd.*

— Be an Equipper (Sheep must multiply
and then become shepherds.)

(Eph 4:11-13)

The apostle with his authority.

The prophet with his perspective.

The evangelist with his enthusiasm.

The pastor with his passion.

The teacher with his thoroughness.

- + *I AM the Door.*
- Be an escort.
- etc.

Take a home assignment to analyse the 4 gospels under these leadership models of Jesus.

16:18 ...“I will build My Church”

Whatever our calling, all our ministries should ultimately lead to the building of Christ’s Church.
i.e. Its expansion and edification

Such a work is sure to earn the fury of hell.

But don’t put on a defensive mentality.

Actually the Church is on the offense (gates of hell)

↑

For the protection of its inmates

vv19-23 ... Keys given to Peter

— “*Binding and untying*” (v19)

Spiritual authority.

The very next instance,

Peter is misusing it! (vv22,23)

Jesus rebuked him as “*Satan.*”

It is not impossible for the most gifted person to be employed by Satan!

Peter’s problem was a conflict between the “*things of God*” and the “*things of men.*”

This is very common among leaders/ministers — “*Enemies of the Cross*” (Phil 3:17-21)

“Christianity began in Palestine as a relationship, moved to Greece and became an idea, went to Rome and became an institution, then came to America and became an enterprise!”
— *Richard Halverson*

And now imported to India and became a profession!

Beware of the prosperity (health-and-wealth) gospel. It is nothing but a modern invention to satisfy the American dream.

It’s a bubble, not the Bible!

16:24 ... Self-denial is an important pre-requisite for leadership.

1) Self-denial means saying no to certain personal likes and dislikes in order to please God and serve people.

Even certain legitimate things, a leader will have to sacrifice

eg) 1 Cor 9 — The entire chapter

vv13-15 — “*I’ve used NONE OF THESE THINGS*” (2 Thess 3:7-9)

2) Self-denial means praying more for the will of God than our own desires.

Mt 26:39 — The prayer

:52,53 — The practice

(The demonstration)

We want “crowns,” not crosses!

Positions	Pains
Thrones	Thorns
Respect	Reproach

Crosses for a leader:

- + The Cross of misunderstanding
Paul (2 Cor 12:15-18)
- + The Cross of thanklessness
Nehemiah (5:19; 13:14,22)
- + The Cross of criticism
Moses — Miriam — Aaron (Num 12)
- + The Cross of false accusation
Joseph — Potiphar's wife (Gen 39:14,15)
- + The Cross of fears and conflicts
The apostles (2 Cor 7:5)
- + The Cross of jealousy
David (1 Sam 18:9)
- + The Cross of betrayal and defection by friends
Jesus (Zech 13:6)

The list is endless.

16:25 ... *"losing one's life"*

Good leaders are risk-takers.

They are neither "overly cautious" nor "overly impetuous" (p16)

↑

(acting suddenly/rashly)

Two examples —

a) Jesus — Jn 11:7-10/Lk 13:31-33

b) Paul — Acts 21:10-15/23:11

"Fear not!" (Lk 12:4,5)

17:1,2 ... The Transfiguration

One of the primary ministries of a leader is to take people into the presence of God so they may get a glimpse of His glory.

This is graphically illustrated in Isaiah 40:3-5

We can compare God's leader as a *Highway for God*. God uses this highway to manifest His glory to the people.

Preparations to make this *"highway"* —

- + *Exalt the valleys.*
— No inferiority complex
- + *Lower the mountains.*
— No superiority complex
- + *Straighten the crooked.*
— No crookedness
- + *Smoothen the rough.*
— No roughness/rudeness

At the end of His ministry, Jesus testified to the Father,

"I've manifested Your Name to them" (Jn 17:6)

"I've given them Your glory" (v22)

"I desire they may behold My glory

which You gave Me"

— in the literal Heaven ultimately (v24)

A leader may not be a good song-leader, but he must learn to lead people in praise, worship and prayer.

(Not an empty shout!)

eg) Solomon (2 Chr 7:1-3)
Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 20:5,6)

Select people and teach them to pray
(Lk 9:10,18,28; 11:1)

17:24-27 ... Leaders should be more careful than others
to obey civil laws, because that will have a
direct bearing on their ministry —

“... lest we offend them” (v27)

Taxes, Customs, Accounts

The world expects a high standard from preachers
and Church leaders.

While opening a fresh account in a bank, the officer,
unable to understand the profession of the applicant
as “Missionary,” entered as, “Saint” in the application!

The importance of financial honesty for a leader —
Lk 16:10-15

Beware of the philosophy:

“I am alright before God;
I don’t bother about people”
2 Cor 8:18-22

18:1-4 ... Beware of power struggles!
Read also Lk 9:43-48
Instead of worshipping “the Majesty of God” (v43),
they were fighting among themselves.

Our merits and accomplishments slip into
insignificance when we keep remembering and
celebrating the preeminence and supremacy of
Jesus (Mk 9:8; Lk 9:36).

“a little child” — the symbol of leadership
(Isa 11:6)

Characteristics of little children —
Opposed to Isaiah 11:6-8 —

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----|-------------------|
| 1. <i>Wolf</i> | ... | Greed |
| 2. <i>Leopard</i> | ... | Ferociousness |
| 3. <i>Young lion</i> | ... | Physical strength |
| 4. <i>Bear</i> | ... | Roughness |
| 5. <i>Lion</i> | ... | Pride |
| 6. <i>Cobra</i> | ... | Venom |
| 7. <i>Viper</i> | ... | Malignancy |
| | | (Treacherousness) |

Positive Characteristics —

“HUMILITY”	Simplicity (Not shrewdness)
	Openness (Not hypocrisy)
	Naturalness (Not assumptions)
	Dependence (Not independence)

Regarding leadership, Jesus brings out several truths
with reference to *“little children”* —

- + Humble as the little child (Mt 18:4)
- + Receive one little child (v5)
 - A love that invites and receives people
 - Friendliness

- + Offend no child (vv6,7)
 - Be a model to others, especially to young people and new believers
 - Jesus is concerned about His “lambs.”
- + Despise no child (v10)
 - Don’t despise the weak, poor, helpless, uninfluential, etc.
- + Seek the lost child (vv13,14)
 - Rescue the perishing and bring back the wayward.
- + Forgive the erring (vv15-17) ... *“moreover”*
 - Be gentle towards those who fall or fail.
 - Gal 6:1-6 — Don’t exalt (v3) but examine (v4) yourself!

18:32,33 Leaders must remember God’s kindness in their lives when they deal with others — especially “fellow-workers” (v28)

19:27-29 Every act of sacrifice will be rewarded.
 We are called not only to believe on Christ but also to suffer for Him (Lk 22:28-30)
 If we suffer with Him today, we shall reign with Him tomorrow —
 Phil 1:29,30

“Bear the Cross and Wear the Crown!”
 — Keep this motto ever before you

20:17-28 The power struggle lifts up its ugly head again!
 The cup ≡ Wrath
 The baptism ≡ Judgment

James was executed/beheaded.
 John was exiled/banished.

The context of power struggle No. 1
 — Transfiguration of Jesus

The context of power struggle No. 2
 — Foretelling of His suffering

The leader and the associates were operating at two different wavelengths! Beware of this temptation when you are in the secondline leadership.

Lessons

1. Have a mind to suffer.
2. Be content where God places you (v23b)
 Shun all competitions in the ministry —
 Jn 3:25-27/4:1-3

Promotion comes from God.
 He alone can bring down a person.
 If men manipulate and work against us,
 God knows how to turn it for good —
 No one can keep you in the pit or the prison forever, if you are destined for the palace!
 Use the time profitably like Joseph (Psa 105:17-22)

3. Maintain the spirit of servanthood (Mt 20:25-28)
 Look for opportunities to help others.
 Be first to accept the so-called menial jobs.
 Dignity of labour.
 Cooking, cleaning, carrying, etc.

We never get to the point of being too important
to do menial things:

eg) Mahatma Gandhi — spinning wheel
— cobbler's bench

Thus, leadership involves ...

1. Suffering
2. Sovereignty
3. Servanthood

Surprises in leadership:

- + *"First will be last, and the last first"* (19:30; 20:16a)
- + *"Many called but few chosen"* (20:16b; 22:14)
(Lk 6:13)
- + *"The rejected becomes the chief"* (21:42)

|
History is replete with the examples of orphans
and destitutes who became great leaders —

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| + Alexander the Great | + Napoleon |
| + Julius Caesar | + Golda Meir |
| + George Washington | + Adolf Hitler |

23:1-11 What leaders need is —
not special dresses (v5),
special seats (v6),
or special titles (v7),
but a special spirit of a SERVANT (v11)

Don't lust for the "Rev" and "Dr" titles.
Such things are not at all necessary
for effective leadership.

Be humble + simple in everything (v12).

"But ..." (v13 onwards)

Woe... Woe... Woe... Woe... Woe... Woe... Woe!

Common pitfalls of hierarchical leaders:
(Each with a "WOE!")

1. Preventing people from going deeper and higher in
the things of God (v13) (A complex!)
2. Cheating the widows and the helpless through
hypocritical prayers (v14)
3. Being interested in numerical growth of their groups
but not in the spiritual growth of the members (v15)
4. Preferring ceremonies and traditions to the Scriptural
truth (vv16,17)
5. Being too legalistic about systems, but forgetting
the spirit of the law (vv23,24)
6. Concentrating on the outward show than the inward
condition (vv25-28)
7. Quoting the life and sayings of martyrs and
missionaries, but despising and opposing those who
stand for and spread the truth today (vv29-32)

24:1,2 Beware of buildings!
Don't boast of them! (Mk 13:1,2)

There's a mistaken notion that if you build and
own huge buildings, you will be respected as a
great leader. Far from truth!

Buildings and structures are necessary. But in these closing days of this age, leaders should invest time and treasure more on people than on properties. One of the greatest secrets of the success of the early Church was its mobility.

“They went everywhere!” (Mk 16:20)

Even in the last chapter of Acts, we read about a *“rented house”* only! (Acts 28:30).

24:3-5,11,24 When the disciples asked Jesus about the signs of the endtimes,
the immediate answer of Jesus was —

“TAKE HEED THAT NO ONE DECEIVES YOU!”

These are days of deception and *“MANY”* are deceived. Leaders have the dual responsibility of saving themselves and the people —

1 Tim 4:16

How to discern Deception / Signs of Deception:

- 1) The candidate begins to think that he is unique. He feels he has received a revelation or no one else has got which many have missed.
- 2) He is more interested in the spoken word than the written Word. He embraces extra-Biblical revelations as a new thing from God.
- 3) He is overexcited about dreams, visions, voices, spectacular and physical manifestations, emotions, etc. He keeps hunting for novelties.

- 4) He becomes an eccentric. He stresses one doctrine or experience at the cost of the rest. He is unaware that this is a distorted view of the Scriptures.
- 5) He does not seek counsel from mature leaders or submit to their oversight. He thinks he gets everything directly from Heaven.
- 6) He excuses certain sins in his life by explaining them away. He is hard on others but soft toward himself.
- 7) He develops an unusual interest in the hidden and secret things under the pretext of searching the Scriptures deeply.
- 8) His practical interest in missions and evangelism wanes.
- 9) He does not receive criticism objectively. The devil makes him believe that he is reproached for the truth.
- 10) He doesn't know or accept that he is deceived. He is blinded by the successes in his ministry.

24:46/25:14-18 Use your talents & skills to the fullest
(i.e. $5 \times 2 = 10$ / $2 \times 2 = 4$)

Be GOING and DOING! (*“He went and traded.”*)

Be brisk.

Be busy.

Jesus is a Multiplier, but He doesn't until we use the gifts and talents in all possible ways.

eg) Singing, music, writing, memorizing, drawing, painting, photography, ...

If you are unemployed,
don't wait for big opportunities,
but use the tiny opportunities all around you.

In the Kingdom everything begins small —

- + *Mustard seed*
- + *Little flock*
- + *Day of small beginnings* (Job 8:7)

Be faithful in small things!

25:31-46 Immediately after the Parable of Talents, Jesus speaks about dividing the sheep and the goats—

Goats → Eat and destroy everything.

Sheep → Just graze where led.

i.e. Helping the Poor/Needy vs. Ignoring them

The social conscience of a leader —

An American Worship leader presented some Hosanna Cassettes to Mother Teresa. She refused them saying they don't keep cassette players lest they are distracted. Later she accepted them to give away to someone. When the American asked her what "worship" meant to her, she answered, "Jesus has told us how to bless Him: What you have done to the little ones, you have done it to Him."

Celebration of Praise — Upreach

Charity to the Poor — Outreach

One without the other is not acceptable (Isa 1:15-17).

Both must be kept in balance.

The very next chapter (!) points out the imbalance of the disciples —

26:6-11 ... *alabaster box*

Our College days (1963-1970):

Weekdays daily evening: Prayer & Meditation

Tuesdays : Leper ministry

Thursdays : Cottage Meetings

Saturdays : Beggars Ministry/
Tract Evangelism

Sunday afternoons : Fasting Prayer

Sunday evenings : Village Outreach

Plan some regular help-ministry to the poor and the suffering —

- + Beggars
- + Platform dwellers
- + So-called untouchables (scavengers)

It is not necessary that in every act of charity there should be a dose of evangelism. What Jesus appreciated (25:31-40) —

The hungry were fed.

The thirsty were quenched.

The strangers were accommodated.

The naked were clothed.

The sick were visited.

The prisoners were visited.

It is easy to forget this aspect of ministry in our enthusiasm for evangelism —

Gal 2:9,10

Bob Pierce (Founder of World Vision):

“Let my heart be broken with that which breaks
the heart of God!”

How to feed the whole world?

Feed one at a time!

John Wesley’s Rule of Conduct:

Do all the good you can,
by all the means you can,
in all the ways you can,
in all the places you can,
to all the people you can,
as long as ever you can!

26:31 “*Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be
scattered*”

The enemy’s primary target is leaders.

Two primary weapons Jesus used at the hour
of temptation:

+ Prayer (v36)

+ Word (v54)

These are the same weapons He used in the wilderness
at the beginning of His ministry —

+ 40 days of fasting Prayer

+ Feeding on the Word

He talked to the Father; and the Father talked to Him.

A systematic devotional life is basic in spiritual warfare
(Eph 6:13-18) —

1. *Belt of Truth* — Life trimmed by the
Word of Truth
2. *Breastplate of
Righteousness* — Heart filled with the
Word of Righteousness
3. *Boots of Peace* — Feet going forth with the
Word of Peace
4. *Shield of Faith* — Resisting all unbelief by the
Word of Faith
5. *Helmet of Salvation* — Mind saturated with the
Word of Assurance of Salvation
6. *Sword of the Spirit* — Tongue proclaiming the
Word of God against Satan

1 to 6 Meditation of the Word

7. *Praying always* (More the work, more Jesus prayed,
Lk 5:15-17)

Why leaders are not able to go on with God till the
end —

a) Love of Money — Judas

b) Love of Pleasure/Comforts — The disciples

c) Love of Life — Peter

But Paul— a) *I coveted no man’s silver or gold* (Acts 20:33).
Jesus: “Freely you’ve received, freely give!”
(Mt 10:8b)

b) *I can do all things thro’ Christ* (Phil 4:12,13).
(*abound ... abase*)

c) *I count not my life dear* (Acts 20:24).

Lessons on Leadership from the Gospel of Mark

2:15-17 Identify with the people.

Become a friend of sinners.

Be where the need is. Mix with people.

eg) Alexander the Great shared his food with his men, called them by their first names, marched along with them in the heat for the battle.

4:26-29 After sowing, go to sleep!

Don't be too anxious.

Learn to relax into God's hand for a miracle.

6:3a Do your work well, whatever it is.

Everything is a training for ministry.

eg) *"My yoke is easy"* — (Mt 11:30)

As a carpenter while making a yoke, Jesus would have shaped and smoothened it to fit the beast's neck without any friction!

"He turned down the tables!" (Mt 21:12)

Only a carpenter can handle them so easily!

eg) Engineering, Medicine, Teaching, Accounting, Karate! Learn skills. (As a young boy I used to keenly watch dhobies, barbers, cobblers, postmen, ...)

Paul's training under Gamaliel, one of Jewry's seven most influential Rabbis, as an asset in his future ministry.

6:30,31 Don't burn out too soon.

Have times of rest and relaxation.

Go to beaches, parks, etc.

— not always for evangelism!

Watch TV, Read newspapers, Listen to music, ...

"The world is run by tired men and women."

9:28,29 Analyse failures.

Search the Scriptures. Seek the Lord's mind.

Many times the Lord has sent to me the book or the magazine just right for the time.

He is interested in helping us —

"Seek and you shall find" (Mt 7:7b)

9:38-40 Learn to recognize other ministries.

Just then Jesus had dealt with an

internal conflict (vv33-37), and

immediately there surfaced an external conflict.

These carnal attitudes are secular.

"Do to others what you desire them do to you" (Lk 6:31)

If you appreciate others, you'll be appreciated.

Maintain a COVENANT relationship, within and outside the group, with God's people —

Covenant of salt (Mk 9:50/Lev 2:13)

12:41-44 Don't go after the rich.

Jesus said to the disciples as to who gave more.

Resist the temptation to run after the affluent.

Don't show partiality in the Church/ministry.

(A specific exhortation to Church leaders:

Js 2:1-5...Only a Church leader can say verse 3.

Lessons on Leadership from the Gospel of Luke

1:80 Make best use of the training period.

It may be months or years.

Between God's choosings and His commissions lies
God's college.

God loves to train His leaders under the tutelage of
seasoned leaders —

- + David learned how to become king while serving
under Saul the rejected king.
- + Joshua under Moses
- + Elisha under Elijah
- + Paul (a) under Gamaliel
(b) 10 years as an assistant Pastor in Antioch
before he was appointed as an assistant
to Missionary Barnabas.

But not all are trained as disciples of someone.

There are exceptions: eg) Moses

God Himself trained him for 40 years in the wilderness
during when he unlearned much that Egypt taught him.

2:52 Keep on learning.

Leaders are perpetual learners.

Learning is the essential fuel for the leader.

Jesus always a learner: Youthhood — Lk 2:52
Ministry — Jn 5:19,20
Suffering — Heb 5:8

+ Do as much reading as possible.

Missionary biographies/Lives of Leaders

+ Learn languages, driving, swimming, etc.

Join NCC, Scouts, etc.

Don't be looking for white-collar jobs.

"favour with men" (2:52) — Mannerism (1 Sam 2:26)

Don't offend people.

My usual problem in getting shoes for my size —

"Sorry, Sir, your foot is too large for this shoe!"

"Sorry, Sir, this shoe is too small for your foot!"

4:3-12 Beware of the pressures or compulsions of the world

The 3 temptations —

In his classic book, *Transforming Leadership*,
Leighton Ford comments on this passage —

+ The pressure to be relevant

Stone → Bread

+ The pressure to be spectacular

Jump from pinnacle.

+ The pressure to be powerful

Bow and worship me.

Similar testing for a leader today —

+ Become a humanitarian.

Social work

+ Become a TV personality.

Publicity and popularity

Jn 7:2-5

+ Become a politician.

The appeal of the “good” can be the enemy of not only of the “best,” but of the “call” of God’s Kingdom.

eg) Missionary Statesman John R. Mott (1865-1955) declined President Woodrow Wilson’s offer to serve as US Ambassador to China. He continued his students ministry. What someone else could have done was not for him.

5:36-39 Be open to change.

Leadership always involves change —
moving people from the old way of doing things
to the new.

Within each of us there’s a built-in resistance to change! (v39)

— which seems to threaten our stability
and challenge our power.

Since leadership involves change, and change precipitates crisis, a leader must expect that there will be those who resist as well as those who follow.

This is a great challenge to every leader.
Jesus was crucified because He advocated
a new order.

10:17-24 Rejoice over the victories of your team members.
Appreciation gives motivation.
Away with the thought that people will be
puffed up if you congratulate them.
People grow when they are appreciated.

14:17-20 Stop giving excuses!

Usual excuses:

- + Field (v18)
Properties, Houses, etc.
- + Flock (v19)
Job, Earning, etc.
- + Family (v20) 9:61,62
Children, Relatives, etc.
- + Formality (9:59,60)
Funeral, Functions, ...

To what extent a leader sacrifices, only to that extent
his followers will sacrifice.

Jawaharlal Nehru often used to tell his associates
and ministers —

I am not interested in your excuses;
get me the job done!

For everything we can find an excuse.

Excuse-finders don’t build God’s Kingdom.

17:17 Understand that the majority is usually thankless
and ungrateful.

Don’t lose heart over this.

Trust in the Lord and do good.

I am learning this lesson again and again.

But God NEVER forgets! (Heb 6:10-12)

Therefore don’t come down!

Lessons on Leadership from the Gospel of John

1:27,15 Don't be over-occupied with the juniority-seniority mentality.

It is spirituality and not seniority that decides superiority.

Another example is Paul vs. other Apostles.

Here the responsibility lies largely on the seniors. They must have the grace to recognize the grace that's given to the juniors.

(Gal 2:9) ← The commendable act of the seniormost and the innermost of the 12-member team!

11:5 Maintain pure and natural relationship with the opposite sex (1 Tim 5:2)

- + Personal Counselling
- + Letter Correspondence
- + Visits to homes
- + Travelling together
- + Talking about sexual matters
- + Physical touch
- + Inordinate affection

13:3-15 *Wash one another's feet.*

Footwashing means helping to —

- + Refresh one another
- + Cleanse one another

This is the only act about which Jesus said that He was leaving an *“example.”*

This is true servant-leadership.

Our ministry to people should lead them to HOLINESS and HAPPINESS.

These two are the rarest commodities in the world. Blessings under good leadership (Isa 32:1-4)

16:7a Raise nextline leaders by giving way.

“It is to your advantage that I go away!”

Don't hold on to your seat and position until death.

“By the very nature of their role, incarnate leaders must plan to make an exit.” — *David Mckenna*

“The art of leadership dwells a good deal in the future.” — *Max Depree*

History is full of instances where powerful leaders have failed to meet the challenge of the future.

“Nothing grows under the giant banyan tree!”

Powerful leaders often will not let the light filter through to nurture seedlings. They will cut off challenging colleagues who may arise as rivals.

17:9 Pray much for those who look to you for leadership. A praying leader raises praying people.

Pray for each of your followers, remembering their strengths and weaknesses.

Jesus — Peter Lk 22:31

Paul — Timothy 2 Tim 1:3-5

Keep a prayer notebook with names.

While praying for an individual, the Holy Spirit will impress on your heart the needs or struggles of that person.

Subjects for prayer: + To be kept (Jn 17:11b,15)
+ To be united (v11b)
+ To be sanctified (v17)
+ To be used (v20)
+ To be perfected (vv23-26)

21:15-19 Love the Lord Jesus supremely.

Ultimately our effectiveness in leadership is proportional to our love and devotion to Jesus.

We will do more harm than good to the sheep when we cool down in that love. Instead of feeding the lambs we will begin to feast on them!

(See next page for a selected material on Leadership.)

Profiles of a Leader

Judson Cornwall

□ The leadership in Israel in the wilderness wanderings was quadruplex in nature —

- + Moses
- + Aaron
- + Levites
- + Elders

□ The encampment of the tribes was governed by four main tribes who pitched their banners to the compass points around the Tabernacle (Num 2) —

- + Judah — East
- + Reuben — South
- + Ephraim — West
- + Dan — North

□ Ezekiel's vision of the four living creatures (Ezek 1:10; 10:14,22) —

- + Face of a man
- + Face of a lion
- + Face of an ox
- + Face of an eagle

□ John the Revelator saw the same living creatures in his vision at Patmos (Rev 4:6,7).

The four gospels —

Matthew	— King	— Lion
Mark	— Servant	— Ox
Luke	— (Son of) Man	— Man
John	— (Son of) God	— Eagle

Matthew x Mark ... King x Servant

Luke x John ... Son of Man x Son of God
(Humanity x Divinity)

□ The fourfold ministry in the Church (Eph 4:11) —

- + Apostles
- + Prophets
- + Evangelists
- + Pastors-Teachers

+ Apostles — Lion — Daring to go into wild
and new territories

+ Prophets — Eagle — Looking at things from
totally a different
perspective

+ Evangelists — Ox — Field work,
treading out the grain

+ Pastors-Teachers — Man — Feel with men
and help them.

Unusual combinations ... Multiple attitudes

□ The people-orientation, Church-centeredness and
service-mindedness are a result of past training.

It is dangerously easy for a leader to think of
himself as his followers speak of him.

When a leader mentally becomes what people proclaim
him to be, he serves the people, not the living God, for
they, not God, are now his creator!

A leader is not to be conformed to needs but
controlled by God.

□ These servants of God were viable, varied, and versatile
rather than being specialists in one field of endeavour,
and their immediate adaptability enhanced their utility
to God's service (Ezek 10:11,22). It was not necessary
for them to turn in order to change the nature of their
ministry.

(1) God's leader as an EAGLE —

The leader must view things from the top.

The leader must first learn to soar into God's presence
as an individual.

Flight cannot be taught from the ground. Both the
trainer and the trainee must fly together.

Like pastor, like people!

The eagle ascends with the gentle column of rising air,
doing so effortlessly and endlessly. Yes, worshipping God
is to be a no-sweat operation for God's leaders (Ezek
44:18).

Many leaders have a sparrow nature —

Fussing in the dirt with lot of activity.

No wonder they are totally exhausted on Mondays!

Others have a pigeon nature!

Stirring to great motion, but no progress.

Beautiful birds but never go anywhere.

Making circles and returning to the same ridge.

(2) God's leader as an OX —

Leadership is work (2 Cor 6:1/1 Cor 3:9)

The ox nature is a balance to the eagle nature.

We are + Workers FOR God (Mk 16:15)

+ Workers WITH God (Mt 11:28-30)

+ Workers UNTO God (Rev 1:6)

Working FOR God — In response to a precept
(OUTER COURT)

Working WITH God — In response to a partner
(INNER COURT)

Working UNTO God — In response to a person
(INNERMOST COURT)

(3) God's leader as a LION —

Sometimes a soaring eagle;

at other times a sweating ox;

on some occasions a stalking lion!

It is only when we lose sight of the holiness and sovereignty
of God that we insist upon a perpetual "*still small voice*."

But God needs men through whom He can roar!

"*THUS SAYS THE LORD!*"

Hos 11:10 / Joel 3:16 / Am 1:2

The screech of an eagle doesn't scare anyone.

The lowing of oxen doesn't terrorize a community.

But when the lion roars, everything in the forest and
village is at once terrorized (Am 3:7,8).

God's warnings are never idle threats.

(4) God's leader as a MAN —

The eagle-ox-lion natures function only at the beckoning
of God. But the "man" nature is active at all times since
it is the foundation for all the other characteristics of
leadership.

— The lengthiest Gospel is the book that shows the
humanity of Christ, even Luke.

Matthew 52 pages; Mark 33; Luke 56;

John 41 (NKJV)

Jesus never ceased being a "normal" man just because
He was God.

If leaders lose their natural faces (man) and are
always caught in on their supernatural faces
(lion, ox, eagle), people cannot relate to them.

□ Pray like an Eagle!

Work like an Ox!

Preach like a Lion!

But be like a Man!

If you are an eagle or a lion all the time,
your wife will become uncomfortable;
eagles and lions are very difficult to sleep with!

Eagle — Soar!

Ox — Bear!

Lion — Roar!

Man — Serve!

□ Boss vs. Leader

Boss

Leader

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|
| + | Drives his men. | — | Inspires them. |
| + | Depends on authority. | — | Depends on good will. |
| + | Evokes fear. | — | Radiates love. |
| + | Says, "I." | — | Says, "We." |
| + | Shows who is wrong. | — | Shows what is wrong. |
| + | Knows how it is done. | — | Knows how to do it. |
| + | Demands respect. | — | Commands respect. |

So, be a leader, not a boss!

Acts of the Apostles

**Midweek Sermons,
Blessing Centre, Vellore, India,
Feb-Nov 1979**



Acts of the Apostles

The Book of Acts is to the Gospels what the fruit is to the tree that bears it. In the Gospels we see the corn of wheat falling to the ground and dying; in the Acts we see it bringing forth much fruit. The Gospels present the acts of Christ; the Book of Acts presents the acts of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ fills the Gospels revealing the Father. The Holy Spirit fills Acts revealing the Son. Jesus foretold, “The Holy Spirit will testify of Me” and “The Holy Spirit will glorify Me” (Jn 15:26; 16:14). The disciples as witnesses for Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit present Him as a historical figure (Acts 2:22; 10:38), as the One who died for our sins (2:23; 3:13-15; 4:10; 5:30; 7:52; 10:39; 13:28; 17:3), as the One who rose again from the dead (1:3; 2:24-32; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40,41; 13:30-37; 17:31), as the One exalted to the highest (2:33-36; 3:21; 5:31), as the One who would return to the earth (1:11), and as the One who would judge the world (10:42).

The “Acts of the Apostles” is often called the “Acts of the Holy Spirit!” The Holy Spirit is referred to more than 50 times in this book. The 120 disciples on the Day of Pentecost were “*filled*” with the Holy Spirit (2:4). When Ananias laid his hands on Paul, he was “*filled*” with the Holy Spirit (9:17). Those who became believers through the ministry of Evangelist Philip “*received*” the Holy Spirit when the Apostles Peter and John laid hands on them (8:17). While Peter was preaching in the house of Cornelius, the Holy Spirit “*fell*” on those who were listening to the Word of God (10:44). The Jewish believers who were with Peter at that time observed that the Holy Spirit was “*poured out*” on the Gentiles (v45). When Paul laid hands

on the Ephesian believers, the Holy Spirit “*came upon*” them (19:6). What a colourful description of the inauguration of the Pentecostal age! God the Father is in Heaven. God the Son is seated up there at His right hand. God the Holy Spirit is the only One in the Trinitarian Godhead who is here on earth today in His total personality blessing us with His literal presence. The Book of Acts brings out this dispensational understanding crystal-clearly.

The Book of Acts covers a period of more than 30 years (Death of Christ: AD 30 ... Martyrdom of Paul and Peter in Rome: AD 64). This is the first three decades of the Early Church. Acts can be divided into two sections. Section One contains the activities of the Apostles in Jerusalem in which Peter is the prominent personage. In Section Two the city of Antioch in Syria is the centre. The Gospel is brought to the Gentiles. Paul is the prominent figure. In other words, we watch in this Book the expansion of the early Church from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria to the end of the earth as per the blueprint given by the Lord of the Church (Acts 1:8). This Book traces the development of the Body of Christ from a primarily Jewish to a predominantly Gentile membership. It’s a one-generation transition. The Book begins with Jerusalem the Jewish capital, and ends with Rome the Gentile capital. It begins with Peter the apostle to the Jews, and ends with Paul the apostle to the Gentiles (Gal 2:9).

Thomas Walker, 1859-1912, a scholarly Missionary who worked for many long years in and around my native District of Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu, compares the story of Acts to the laying down of a Missionary Railway from

Jerusalem, via various provinces of the Empire, to Rome the great metropolis. He compares the towns and cities to stations on this Railway, with varying durations of stops. Acts is the primary textbook for studying missionary principles. I am not a missiologist but I read and reread, meditated and remeditated, and studied and restudied the Book of Acts umpteen number of times. This is how mine became a missionary blood. Otherwise it would not have been possible for me to lead a revival-cum-missionary organisation for 33 years, 1971-2003. We see the Missionaries in Acts constantly on the move. This is the main reason for giving Paul's ministry the label of missionary "journeys!" Which Bible doesn't have these maps at the back? It's the apostolic pattern in the Book of Acts that unsettled me and my wife from BYM's central administrative office in our native State of Tamilnadu and propelled us to various States in India to be a part of the frontline missionary teams. No wonder hundreds have been challenged and catapulted to distant lands as missionaries through my missionary sermons. To God be the glory! I urge Pastors to teach the Book of Acts exhaustively to their congregations so we may get back the missionary vision we have lamentably lost. Our youth must be thrilled by the arrests, imprisonments, beatings, riots, narrow escapes, shipwrecks, trial scenes and rescues which the apostles faced through the power of the Holy Spirit. Without this our youngsters are now chilled!

Luke the author of the Book of Acts is the only Gentile among the Bible writers. Interestingly God chose a non-Jew to write the first chapters of Church History! "Luke" is a Greek name. Besides being an accurate historian, he had a wide circle of contacts. In Acts, he mentions 95 different persons from 32 countries, 54 cities and 9

Mediterranean islands. One reason for the weakness of the testimony of the Church in India today is its lack of social skills. We talk about the "favour with God" but forget the "favour with men." Luke points out this balance in the life of Jesus in His growing years (Lk 2:52). Luke was Paul's travelling companion (Col 4:14; Acts 16:8-11; 2 Tim 4:11; Phile 24). He was obviously a friendly person. That's why Paul calls him as the "beloved" physician (Col 4:14). Freeing himself from a negative attitude, Luke in his Acts narrative points out the neutral or even friendly attitude of Roman officials toward leading Christians and the movement as a whole. Look at these examples: Roman Proconsul, Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:7-12); Chief Magistrate of Philippi (16:37-39); Proconsul of Achaia (18:12-16); Magistrate in Ephesus (19:35-39); Governor Felix (23:26-29); King Agrippa (26:32); Imperial guards (28:30,31). How much we Indian Christians need to learn in a country that's predominantly non-Christian! Oh, for more Luke-like medical missionaries to take care of missionaries' health, to give medical aid to the folks in virgin soils, and to maintain accurate record of mission history!

The Book of Acts serves as a link or a bridge between the Gospels and the Epistles. The Epistles must be interpreted with the backdrop of Acts. Luke concludes the Book of Acts with the words, "*no one forbidding*" (Acts 28:31). Yes, the expansion of Christianity to all the world was not hindered by persecution (2:1-8:4), cultural barriers (8:5-40), organized opposition (9:1-31), physical barriers (9:32-43), racial barriers (10:1-11:30), political opposition (12:1-25), geographic boundaries (13:1-20:12) and chains of human bondage (20:13-28:31). Luke ends his Gospel with an "*Amen*" (Lk 24:53), but the Book of Acts abruptly, expecting us to write its 29th Chapter!

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*The last recorded words of Jesus
before His ascension —*

*"You shall receive Power
when the Holy Spirit has come on you;
and you shall be witnesses to Me
in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria,
and to the ends of the earth."*

(Acts 1:8)

Acts Chapter 1

Preparation for Revival

Acts 2 tells us what happened on the Day of Pentecost.

Acts 1 is a prelude to Pentecost.

Pentecost may be compared to a Revival.

It's a fresh visitation from God —

"Times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19)

Acts 1 gives us a number of lessons on the Preparation for Revival —

(1) Obedience to the revealed will of God

"commandments through the Holy Spirit" (v2)

"Jesus commanded them to wait for the Promise of the Father" (v4)

"Holy Spirit to those who obey Him" (5:32)

(2) Unshakable faith in Christ's resurrection

"He showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs" (1:3)

All thro' the Book of Acts the disciples witnessed for the resurrection of Jesus —

1:22; 2:24,31; 3:15; 4:2,33; 5:30; 10:40,41; 13:30,31; 17:18,31; 23:6

Revival helps us to experience afresh the power of Christ's resurrection (1 Cor 6:14; Eph 1:19,20).

(3) Need to wait for Revival

Revival comes suddenly but not instantly
(Acts 1:4; 2:2).

Wait for the *former and latter rain* (Js 5:7)

Let's hold on to God for the *"latter rain"*
(Joel 2:23; Zech 10:1)

Do not lose heart — Though it tarries, it will come
— *"not many days from now"* (Acts 1:5)

(4) Understand the supreme purpose of Revival.

To become powerful witnesses for Jesus (Acts 1:8)

Other issues are secondary (v7).

Don't be gazing into heaven with date-setting (v11)

The word *"witness"* is a key to understand the Book of Acts.

Outpouring is for ingathering! (2:41; 4:4)

(5) Do not be satisfied with earlier experiences.

The disciples named in Acts 1:13 had witnessed and performed miracles earlier (Lk 10:17)

The Holy Spirit came on Mary to conceive Jesus
(Lk 1:35; Acts 1:14)

(6) Nothing happens until God's people get united in prayer.

"They continued with one accord in prayer"
(Acts 1:14)

They were with *one accord* on the Day of Pentecost
(2:1)

The word “*one accord*” occurs 11 times in Acts.

7) Strengthening of leadership to handle explosive Church growth

Peter presents the need to choose another apostle to replace Judas Iscariot.

Matthias chosen (Acts 1:15-26)

A leader must have a right “*heart*” (v24)

Several Revivals in Church history have died out too soon without abiding fruits because of lack of leadership.

Conclusion

Revival dies when reports are exaggerated.

We need men like Luke for accurate reporting
(Lk 1:3,4; Acts 1:1).

Acts Chapter 2

Day of Pentecost

- Pentecost was the 4th annual feast of the Jews. It came 50 days after the Feast of the Passover. Pentecost means “fiftieth.”

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| a) Passover | (Lev 23:4,5) |
| b) Unleavened Bread | (vv6-8) |
| c) First Fruits | (vv9-14) |
| d) Pentecost | (vv15-21) |

Pentecost was called the Feast of Weeks (7 weeks)
(Ex 34:22)

The Resurrection of Jesus is referred as the “first fruits” (1 Cor 15:23)

Pentecost came 50 days after His resurrection or 10 days after His ascension (Acts 1:3).

- Historical references to the Day of Pentecost —
Paul wanted to be in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 20:16; 1 Cor 16:8).
- Spiritual duties of this Festival as prescribed in Deuteronomy 16 —
 - 1) Revere God with freewill offering (v10)
 - 2) Rejoice before the Lord (v11)
 - 3) Remember your redemption (v12)
- We can relate these three actions to Pentecost for our personal experience —

1) Pentecost is a Revival of Giving (Dt 16:10)

The disciples sold their possessions and shared with the needy (Acts 2:44,45)

They placed the sole proceeds at the Apostles' feet for distribution (4:32-35)

The first judgment in the early Church was on financial dishonesty (Acts 5)

2) Pentecost is a Revival of Rejoicing (Dt 16:11)

My heart rejoiced ... tongue glad (Acts 2:26)

Gladness and simplicity of heart (v46)

Filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit (13:52)

When we receive the Holy Spirit, "*rivers of living water*" start flowing out from the "*fountain*" Jesus installs in us (Jn 4:14; 7:37-39)

Restoration of joyful worship —

"joy and gladness in God's House" (Joel 1:16)

"Fear not ... be glad and rejoice" (2:21,23)

3) Pentecost is a Revival of Witnessing (Dt 16:12)

Peter's sermon brought in 3000 souls (Acts 2:41)

Daily addition to the Church (v47)

Acts 1-7 : Witnessing in Jerusalem

8-12 : Witnessing in all Judea & Samaria

13-28: Witnessing to the uttermost

• Common prejudices for the Pentecostal experience —

a) It's emotional.

Emotions are God-given for expressing our joys and sorrows.

b) It's denominational.

Denominational label not to be attached to any Biblical experience just because of emphasis.

c) It's divisive.

Truth divides. Form without power is to be eschewed (2 Tim 3:5).

d) It's controversial.

If all that's controversial is to be set aside, we will have no doctrine!

Conclusion

We must work under the Father God for restoring the gifts of the Spirit and the ministerial gifts of the ascended Lord (1 Cor 12:4-6, 8-10; Eph 4:11,12).

The Church from where it is must come back to where it should be!

Acts Chapter 3

A Miracle and a Sermon

- This chapter narrates the first healing miracle in the early Church and the sermon that followed explaining how this miracle happened.

There are several lessons we learn from this 26-verse chapter —

(1) Power of unity

vv1,3,11, *“Peter and John”*

Though not opponents, they were sort of rivals to each other. Even after resurrection Jesus had to chide Peter for inquisitiveness over John (Jn 21:20-22).

Pentecost fused Peter and John together through the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of love (Rom 5:5)

One reason why spectacular miracles are rare these days is that we are too individualistic with no team spirit.

(2) Power of Prayer

v1, *“To the temple at the hour of prayer”*

It was the *ninth hour*,

i.e. 3 pm for the evening prayer —

The Jews had 3 times of prayer —

3rd hr, 6th hr, 9th hr

9 am, 12 noon, 3 pm

This was the regular practice of —

David (Psa 55:17)

Daniel (Dan 6:10)

We must have fixed times for prayer.

This must not be missed except in unusual circumstances.

Peter and John as key leaders must have had so much to do because of the sudden addition of 3000 souls to the Church (Acts 2:41). But prayer was their top priority.

Prayer was the lifeline of the early Church —

Acts 1:14,24; 3:1; 4:31; 6:4; 8:15; 9:40; 10:9; 12:5; 13:3; 14:23; 16:13,16,25; 20:36; 21:5; etc.

(3) Power of Jesus’ Name

v6, *“In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth ...”*

v16, *“His name, through faith in His Name, has made this man strong”*

Mk 16:17,18, *“In My name ... they will lay hands on the sick...”*

Js 5:14, *“Let elders anoint with oil in the Name of the Lord”*

The Name of Jesus is not to be used as a magic wand. The user must have knelt before it and surrendered to His lordship (Phil 2:10). Otherwise, instead of casting out the devil, he will chase you out (Acts 19:11-16). Of course, that also will *“magnify”* His Name (v17)!

(4) Power of the Gospel

- Peter's sermon was Christ-centered —
vv13,26, *"God's Servant Jesus"*
v14,15 *"Holy One ... the Just ... Prince of life"*
v20, *"Jesus Christ who was preached to you"*
v22, *"A Prophet like Moses"*
- Peter presented Jesus as the One who fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament —
v13, *"Jesus the Servant of the God of Abraham,
Isaac and Jacob"*
v18, *"All the prophets foretold ... Christ would
suffer"*
v21, *"Restoration ... God spoke through all His
prophets"*
v22, *"Moses truly said ... A Prophet like me"*
v24, *"All the prophets from Samuel"*
- Peter forthrightly preached repentance —
v19, *"Repent and be converted"*
v23, *"Every soul who will not hear Jesus shall be
utterly destroyed"*
v26, The blessing of blessings: *"Turning from your
iniquities"*

Conclusion

These days we have overemphasized miracles to the exclusion of presenting the message of the pure Gospel. Message without miracles may be preferred to miracles without message.

Acts Chapter 4

Souls or Stones?

Introduction

Wherever the early disciples and the apostles went, they got either souls or stones or sometimes both!

This chapter narrates the first persecution the early Church faced.

There was never a time in Church history when persecution was absent.

Persecution must not surprise us but only its absence!

Evangelism angers Satan. Every time the Kingdom of God gains a soul, the kingdom of Satan loses one (Col 1:13).

There was persecution following the Coming of the Son of God (Mt 2:3,16). Now there's persecution following the Coming of the Spirit of God (Acts 4:3).

This chapter teaches us how to face persecution and respond to it.

(1) Persecution starts with threats.

v17, *"Let us severely threaten them"*

v21, *"They further threatened them"*

v29, *"Lord, look on their threats"*

The enemies of the Jews sent an "open letter" of threat to Nehemiah (Neh 6:5,9).

The disciples must have reminded themselves of the words of Jesus when He sent them —

Mt 10:28, *“Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul”*

(2) This first recorded prayer after Pentecost is a model (vv 24-30).

+ They acknowledged the sovereignty of God —
“You are the Creator” (v24)

+ The rage and the plot were not primarily against the Church but against Christ (vv25,26)

+ Whatever Herod and Pilate did to Christ was only according to God’s predetermination (vv27,28)

(3) They did not pray for persecution to stop.

This is a great lesson we need to learn from them.

They prayed for “greater boldness” and “greater miracles” (Acts 4:29,30).

Following the threats, Nehemiah prayed,
“O God, strengthen my hands” (Neh 6:9)

(4) They depended on the Holy Spirit to answer the persecutors.

“Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, Rulers ...” (v8)

This is what Jesus had already promised them: *“When you are brought before governors and kings ... It is not you who speak but the Spirit in you”* (Mt 10:18-20).

They kept in mind who gave them the authority to preach —

“Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God” (Acts 4:19; Mt 28:18-20).

“We cannot but speak” (Acts 4:20)

The only Government Order we cannot obey is when it prohibits practising and propagating our faith.

Their defence highlighted crucifixion and resurrection and prophecies (vv10,11).

They boldly declared that there’s no name other than that of Jesus for anyone to be saved (v12).

Their boldness got them certified as the “followers of Jesus” (v13).

We err by depending more on our “education” and “training” than on a live relationship with God (v13).

(5) Evangelism and social concern must go together.

Following the first Outpouring, there was liberal sharing
(Acts 2:44,45)

The same thing followed the second Outpouring also
(4:32-37)

Even a Levite, who generally will be at the receiving end, parted with his land (v36).

We cannot expect “great power” and “great grace” without loosening our grip on earthly goods (v33).

Conclusion

Church growth cannot be stopped whatever be the persecution.

The *Rock of Ages* is the “*chief cornerstone*”
(v11; Isa 28:16; Zech 4:7; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:4,5)

“The gates of Hell cannot prevail against it”
(Mt 16:18)

Let’s be stone-bold!

Acts Chapter 5

Purification and Persecution

This chapter begins with the word, “*But!*”
There are always bad elements in any Church.
We will study this chapter without an outline.

- The first recorded sin in the Church was by a family (vv1,2). The first sin in the world was also by a family (Gen 3:1-6).

Spouses must have the freedom to correct one another
(Acts 5:2)

The sin was hypocrisy —

“lied to the Holy Spirit” (v3)

“lied not to men but to God” (v4d)

“agreed to test the Spirit of the Lord” (v9)

Jesus pronounced “*woe*” only on the hypocrites (Mt 23).

- The first judgment of God was in the Church
“Ananias fell down and died” (Acts 5:5)
“Sapphira fell down and died” (:10)

Yes, “*judgment must begin in the House of God*”
(1 Pet 4:17)

The Result: Fear gripped the insiders and outsiders
(Acts 5:11)

Hypocrisy was in money matter. It’s still the same today in most of the Churches, both in the pulpit and the pew. That’s the root problem (1 Tim 6:10,11).

- Following the purification in the Church, God's miracle power was released —

"many signs and wonders" (Acts 5:12)

God's wonders of tomorrow depend on our sanctification of today (Josh 3:5)

Manifestation of God's power invariably results in addition of large number of souls to the Church —

Acts 2:41 ... 3000

4:4 ... 5000

5:14 ... *multitudes*

It was a healing revival —

"sick ... streets ... shadow of Peter" (v15)

"sick ... unclean spirits" (v16)

- When God's Spirit actively works, Satan counteracts through problems from within and without. Verses 1-10 speak of the internal problem; verses 17-41 speak of the persecution from the opponents of the Gospel.

What normally follows verbal threats is imprisonment (v18)

This is observed all through Church history until today.

We come across three imprisonments in Acts —

Peter and John (5:19)

Peter alone (12:7,8)

Paul and Silas (16:25,26).

On all these three occasions God supernaturally opened the prison doors. In the first two instances the release was through *"an angel of the Lord."* God who delivered Peter left James to be beheaded (12:2,3). God's prerogative ways are mysterious!

- God's deliverances are purposeful. The angel told the released apostles,

"Go, stand ... speak all the words of this life"
(Acts 5:20)

They didn't waste time but went to the temple *"early in the morning"* and taught (v21). World evangelisation not possible without a sense of urgency.

When the temple authorities questioned the apostles why they did not obey their orders to stop preaching, they gave the most fitting answer —

v29, *"We ought to obey God rather than men"*

Peter's reply brought in all the three Persons of the blessed Trinity —

vv30-32, *"God of our fathers ... Jesus the Prince and Saviour ... Holy Spirit the witness"*

Such instant replies are possible only through the Holy Spirit (Mt 10:18-20).

- Gamaliel interfered when the opponents were about to kill the apostles (Acts 5:33,34). He made some historical reference —

Theudas who had 400 followers (v36)

Judas who drew many people (v37)

Several ruthless enemies of the Church have slowed down when reminded of certain historical facts.

Gamaliel's was a practical counsel but the truth content of his words is questionable (vv38,39) —

“If it is of men, it will come to nothing.”

No, so many anti-Christian endeavours are flourishing all over the world. These will come to nothing not immediately but ultimately when Christ returns.

Similarly the statement of Nicodemus, another Pharisee, is only partly true (Jn 3:2). Miracles happen in the other camps also.

- This chapter ends gloriously and triumphantly —
 - v41, *“The apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name.”*
 - v42, *“Daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching.”*
-
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Acts Chapter 6

Stephen among the Seven

- + Chapter 5 presented a problem from within and a problem from without.
So does Chapter 6.
- + Verses 1 to 7 speak of the appointment of seven Deacons, and verses 8 to 15 introduces the ministry of Stephen.
- Multiplication of disciples witnessed a murmuring among them (v1). Yes, Church growth is never without problems. The growth was also fast —

Acts 2:41 (3000) ... 4:4 (5000) ... 5:14 (multitudes)

It was a racial and linguistic issue —

Hellenists vs. Hebrews (Acts 6:1)

Hellenists were Greek-speaking Jews.

This is comparable to the highly prevalent caste system in the Indian Churches. We must constantly bear in mind the repeated Apostolic admonition —

“No distinction between Jews and Gentiles”

(1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11)

- The apostles did not ignore or deny the problem. This is the first lesson leaders have to learn in conflict resolution.

They exhibited practical wisdom in sorting out the issue. Though caring for the widows is a basic Bible

doctrine, they didn't want to leave the ministry of the "Word of God" for food distribution (v2).

Oh, how many Indian Pastors have become orphanage managers just to grab an American or German offer!

Because of the delicate nature of the issue, they did not choose men themselves for "this business," but let the complainers do it (v3).

The names are all Greek. Obviously they were of Grecian class (v5).

- Even for the servers of food the triple requirement was public *reputation*, *Spiritfulness* and *wisdom* (v3).

These Servers selected by the Hellenists and "appointed" by the apostles were the first team of *Deacons*, meaning "helpers." Paul lists out qualifications for them in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Do we stress these qualifications for the Committee Members in our Churches? In Acts 6, it was not "election" by voting but "selection" based on social and spiritual standing.

The "laying on of hands" here was to give their choice an apostolic endorsement (v6). Other instances of laying hands, in the Book of Acts —

8:17; 19:6... for receiving the Holy Spirit

13:3 ... for setting apart for missionary work

28:8 ... for healing

"Laying on of hands" is one of the fundamentals in the "doctrine of Christ" (Heb 6:2).

This must not be done indiscriminately (1 Tim 5:22).

- The outcome of the Apostles' wise and Spirit-guided decision was marvellous (Acts 6:7) —
 - + *The Word of God spread*
 - + *The number of disciples multiplied*
 - + *A great many priests obeyed the Gospel*
 - + *Great wonders and signs thro' one of the Seven* (v8)
- The first in the list of seven Servers was Stephen (v5). With his *faith* and *power* of the Holy Spirit, he performed great miracles (v8). The opposers were unable to resist the *wisdom* and the *Spirit* by which he spoke (v10). Mere academic knowledge and technical skill cannot accomplish anything for God's Kingdom.

Active soulwinners cannot escape false accusation (v13; Mt 26:59; Acts 24:13)

The accusations against Stephen were because of the nominal religion of the accusers (Acts 6:11-14) —

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| + <i>Moses</i> | — Founders and Predecessors
Jn 4:12; Lk 3:8 |
| + <i>God</i> | — Lip service, no heart
Mt 15:8 |
| + <i>Holy Place</i> | — Localisation of Deity
Acts 7:48,49 |
| + <i>The Law</i> | — Swallowing a camel
Mt 23:23,24 |

+ *The Customs* — Traditions
Convenient substitution
Mt 15:4-6

■ A sad observation in this chapter —

Murmuring of Hellenists against Hebrews (v1).

What happened to the marvellous oneness we see in
2:44-47 following Pentecost?

Without our ceaseless “*endeavour*” the *unity of the Spirit* cannot be maintained (Eph 4:3).

Acts Chapter 7

A Martyrdom Sermon

- This is the longest Chapter in Acts. Stephen’s Sermon is the longest recorded one in this Book (vv2-53).

Peter’s Pentecostal sermon (Acts 2) ... 23 verses

Paul’s first sermon (Acts 13)... 26 verses

Stephen’s sermon (Acts 7) ... 52 verses

The sermon Stephen preached as a prelude to his martyrdom is a scholarly summary of the history of Israel, beginning with Abraham (v2). I call it Stephen’s Martyrdom Sermon because he would have sensed what awaited him (6:12).

In this Sermon, Stephen refutes the charges hurled against him in Chapter 6, with sufficient theological explanation —

- (1) They said that Stephen spoke blasphemous words against Moses (6:11).

But he introduces Moses as “*well-pleasing to God ... learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, mighty in words and deeds*” (7:20,22).

And as “*the one God sent to be a ruler and deliverer*” (v35)

“*This is that Moses*” who prophesied about the coming of Jesus (v37)

- (2) They charged that Stephen spoke blasphemous words against God (6:11).

But Stephen said how God hated idolatry of any sort (7:38-43)

- (3) They charged that Stephen did not cease to speak blasphemous words against the Temple (6:13).

Stephen explained how God as *“the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands,”* quoting Isaiah 66:1,2 (Acts 7:48-50)

- 4) They charged that Stephen spoke non-stop against the Law (6:13).

But he said that disobedience to the Law was stiff-necked resistance to the voice of the Holy Spirit (7:51-53).

- 5) They charged that Stephen spoke of Jesus that He would destroy the Temple and change the customs delivered by Moses (6:14).

But Stephen acknowledged that the Law was given *“by the direction of angels”* (7:53b).

- One main theme of Stephen’s Sermon is what Jesus taught the Samaritan woman —

God is a Spirit and as such He cannot be localised
(Jn 4:19-24)

Spiritual worship can be done anywhere.

God’s revelation came to Abraham while he was outside the Land of Promise (Acts 7:2-5).

The Law was given in the wilderness (vv36,38).

Solomon’s Temple, however magnificent, was inadequate to home the *Most High* for whom Heaven is the throne and earth is the footstool (vv47-50).

It is deplorable that most of us Christians have not understood the truth boldly presented by the first martyr of the Church that God under the New Covenant does not sanctify places but only the people (Eph 2:19-22).

Acts Chapter 8

God who guides

- Examples of faithful deacons promoted! (1 Tim 3:13) —
 - Stephen as a martyr (Acts 7)
 - Philip as an evangelist (Acts 8)
- In this chapter we have practical lessons on how God guides us —
 - (1) By circumstance/situation (vv1-4)
 - When the disciples did not go out as Acts 1:8,
 - God blessed them with Acts 8:1!
 - Joseph fleeing with Baby Jesus (Mt 2:13,20)
 - (2) By general, plain, Scriptural commands/
commissions.
 - Preach ... preach ... preach* (Acts 8:5,25,40)
 - + Each Christian called to be a soulwinner (Mt 4:19)
 - + Jesus going to all the villages (Lk 4:42-44)
 - (3) By specific information (Acts 8:14,15)
 - + Sensitivity to the happenings
 - + 3 groups of people —
 - People who make things happen
 - People who watch things happen
 - People who know not what happens

eg) Jesus beginning His (Galilean) ministry on
hearing about John's imprisonment
(Mt 4:12/Mk 1:14)

- (4) By (angelic) visions, etc. (Acts 8:26)
 - Promised in last-day Outpouring (Joel 2:28)
 - + God chooses to do this way.
 - eg) Conversion of Paul
 - Commission to Peter
 - etc.
 - (5) By the Spirit's inspiration/ "*the voice*" (Acts 8:29)
 - Privilege of the "*sons*" of God (Rom 8:14)
 - eg) Paul (Acts 20:22,23)
 - Also the gifts of the Spirit.
 - (6) By supernatural/extraordinary phenomenon
(Acts 8:39)
 - eg) Deliverance of Peter from prison (Acts 12:7-10)
 - Deliverance of Paul & Silas from prison
(Acts 16:25,26)
- So many varieties — but generally in agreement with:
- 1) The WORD of God (2 Pet 1:16-21)
 - 2) The VOICE of the Spirit
 - 3) The EVIDENCE of Circumstances
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Acts Chapter 9

Growing strong in the Lord

This chapter presents the dramatic conversion of Saul Paul. “Saul” was his Hebrew name and “Paul” his Greek name (Acts 13:9). After he entered missionary work he as well as Luke preferred the name “Paul,” appropriately as an Apostle to the Gentiles.

Jerusalem to Damascus was 160 miles

Legend: “Cain murdered Abel here”

■ How to grow strong in the Lord

“Saul increased all the more in strength (Acts 9:22)”

1. Surrender

“Lord, what do You want me to do?” (v6)

2. Prayer

“Behold, he is praying” (v11)

3. Healing

“Receive your sight” (v17)

(Merits of Calvary)

4. Holy Spirit

“Be filled with the Holy Spirit” (v17)

5. Obedience/Word

“Immediately ... he was baptized” (v18)

“Why are you waiting? Be baptized” (22:16)

6. Fellowship

“He spent some days with the disciples”

(Acts 9:19)

7. Witnessing

“Immediately he preached Christ” (v20)

■ Three great influencing factors on Paul —

1. Charisma (Gentleness) of Christ

“I am Jesus whom you are persecuting” (vv4,5)

2. Affection of Ananias

“Brother Saul ...” (v17)

3. Broad heart of Barnabas

“He brought him to the apostles” (v27)

No wrath or vengeance!

■ Various Names employed for God’s people after Pentecost in Acts —

1. *Believers* (2:44) — By confession

2. *Church* (2:47; 5:11) — By company

3. *Disciples* (6:1,2) — By conduct

4. *Saints* (9:13,32,41) — By calling
(eg. Rom 1:1,2)

5. *Brothers* (11:1; 14:2) — By community

6. *Christians* (11:26) — By commitment /
consecration to
“Christ the Lord”

Acts Chapter 10

The Impartial God

- Before we move into the study of Chapter 10, let's compare Chapter 9 with 10, for a few interesting observations —
 - + Conversion of a Jew ... Conversion of a Gentile
 - + Persecuting the Lord ... Praying to the Lord
 - + Both blameless, but to be converted.
 - + 9:10 & 10:5 ... Ananias & Peter
(God always uses men, not even angels,
for Gospel proclamation)
eg) Ex 3:7-10
 - + 9:10 & 10:10 ... Vision & Trance
 - + 9:3 & 10:3 ... "Heaven meets"
- Seven Triplets in Chapter 10 —
 - 1) 3 qualities of Cornelius(v2)
 - 2) 3 men + 3 pairs of men (vv7,9 → 10:23/11:12)
 - 3) 3 types of creatures in the animal kingdom (v12)
Walk ... Creep ... Fly
 - 4) 3 commands to Peter (v13)
 - 5) 3 times the voice (v16)
 - 6) 3 ways God spoke —
 - a) Vision to Cornelius / Angel (v3)
 - b) Trance for Peter / Voice, Vision (vv10-13,17)
 - c) Explicit/open guidance of the Spirit
(vv19,20)

- 7) 3 transactions from Heaven
 - a) Cornelius & God (vv1-8)
 - b) Peter & the Lord (vv9-33)
 - c) Gentiles & the Spirit (vv34-48)

- "God is no respecter of persons" (v34)

This is the first occurrence of this truth in the NT.
Other references —

- 1) Dt 10:16,17 (No stiff-neckedness)
- 2) Job 34:19-23 (Nothing hidden)
- 3) Acts 10:34-38 (Gift of the Son + Spirit)
- 4) Rom 2:11-16 (Judgment)
- 5) Gal 2:2-6 (Adherence to the Word)
- 6) Eph 6:6-9 (Reward)
Col 3:22-25
- 7) 1 Pet 1:14-17 (Holy walk)

- Roman Centurions in the history of the Gospel —

Army personnel: Honesty, Vision, Cooperation, etc.	1. Mt 8:10,11 — Faith for servant's healing
	2. Mt 27:54 — Confession at the foot of the Cross
	3. Acts 10:1 — First Gentile to receive the Spirit

- Peter's "NOT-SO-LORD" as against Paul's "YES-LORD"
9:6

Rom 11:34 Don't counsel God!	1. Mt 16:22 — Regarding the Cross
	2. Mt 26:31-35 — Regarding the denial
	3. Acts 10:14 — Regarding God's commandment

Acts Chapter 11

The Word of God

- This Chapter has two sections —
 - vv1-18 ... Peter's defence for visiting the house of a non-Jew
 - vv19-30 ... Emergence of Antioch as the new centre
- An outstanding statement of Peter in his defence —
"I remembered the WORD of the Lord" (v16)
Instances in Peter's life when he revered the "Word of God"
 - + Miraculous catch of fish (Lk 5:5)
 - Beginning of Christ's ministry
 - + Denial (Lk 22:61,62)
 - Close of Christ's earthly ministry
 - + Spirit's outpouring (Acts 1:5/11:16)
 - Just before Christ's Ascension
- The Epistles of Peter are full of references to the "WORD"
 1. The WORD OF THE LORD
 - Unfeigned love with a pure heart (1 Pet 1:22-25)
 2. The WORD
 - Growth without guile & hypocrisy (2:1-3)
 3. The WORD
 - Practical (family) living (3:1,2)

4. The ORACLES OF GOD
 - Ministering to others' edification (4:10,11)
 5. The PROMISES
 - Partaking of Divine nature (2 Pet 1:4-8)
 6. The WORD OF PROPHECY
 - (The glory) of worshipping (1:16-21)
 7. The HOLY COMMANDMENT
 - Escaping backsliding (2:20-22)
 8. The PROMISE & SCRIPTURES
 - Purification through steadfast hope (3:2,5,13,16,17)
- The Church in Antioch —
 - A dynamic Gentile Church
 - First called "*Christians!*"
 - (Not even in Jerusalem)

The 5-fold ministry of Eph 4:11 in this chapter —

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| (1) <i>Apostles</i> | (Acts 11:1,2) |
| (2) <i>Prophets</i> | (v27) |
| (3) <i>Evangelists</i> | (vv19,20) |
| (4) <i>Pastors/Elders</i> | (v30) |
| (5) <i>Teachers</i> | (v26) |
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Acts Chapter 12

Power of Prayer

This Chapter primarily speaks of Peter's imprisonment and how God released him in answer of prayer.

- Four Herods in the NT History ...
 1. Herod the great (Mt 2:1)
 - Slaying babies at Christ's birth
 2. Herod Antipas (Lk 13:31,32) — (S/o Herod the great)
 - Beheading John the Baptist (Mk 6:17)
 - Jesus' trial (Lk 23:7)
 - "That fox" (Lk 13:32)
 3. Herod Agrippa I — Acts 12
 4. Herod Agrippa II — (S/o Herod Agrippa I) —
 - Paul's witness before him (Acts 25,26)
- Martyrdom of the Apostles (as per tradition) —
 1. Peter — Crucified at Rome
 2. Andrew — Crucified in Achaia
 3. James — Beheaded by Herod (Acts 12:2)
 4. Philip — Martyred at Hierapolis
 5. Bartholomew — Flayed to death
 6. Matthew — Slain
 7. Thomas — Martyred near Chennai
 8. James — Thrown down from the temple
 - (of Alphaeus) and beaten to death
 9. Simon the zealot — Crucified

10. Lebbaeus (Thaddaeus) — Shot to death by
 - arrows in Persia
11. Matthias — Stoned to death
12. John — Natural death

Acts 1:8 ... *You shall be My witnesses*

Witness — Greek = Martyr

- Peter spared, but not James! (Acts 12:2,3) — Why?
 - + The Bible does not promise a "safe" career!
 - 2 Tim 2:12, "*If we endure ...*"
 - 3:12, "*all ... godly ... persecution*"
 - 1 Pet 2:21, "*Christ suffered ... an Example*"
 - + But none of His servants will die before time —
 - outside His will
 - 1 Pet 4:1,2, "*Christ suffered...same mind...will of God*"
- "Angel" — mentioned 7 times in this chapter
 - (vv7,8,9,10,11,15,23)

Angels & Believers —

- i) Guidance (Gen 24:7,40)
 - ii) Provision (1 Ki 19:5-8)
 - iii) Protection & Deliverance (Psa 34:7) (Dan 6:22)
 - iv) Fighting (Dan 10:13,20; 12:1)
 - v) Comfort (Acts 27:23,24)
 - vi) Ministry (Heb 1:14)
 - vii) Final gathering (Mt 24:31)
- Prayer gatherings in homes have brought marvellous answers down through Church history (Acts 12:5,12-17)

Acts Chapter 13

The First Missionary Team

- This chapter begins with God's call for Cross-cultural Missionary Evangelism —

v2, *"Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them"*

The call came when a 5-member ministerial team was worshipping the Lord with fasting (v2). Their instant obedience teaches us that God speaks to those who obey Him (v3).

Here's a classic example of God choosing men for translocal ministry from among local ministers (v1). Barnabas and Saul were perhaps like two eyes for this team. How often we fail to release promising candidates for pioneer ministries!

So far, Peter and his associates were prominent in the Acts story. From this Chapter onwards, Luke presents Paul and his associates as the main players.

The shift from Jerusalem to Antioch is noteworthy.

- Prayer played a vital role in the life of the early Church as seen in Acts —

1:14 ... Before Pentecost ... for power

9:9,11 ... Paul after conversion

10:9,10 ... Peter before visiting Cornelius

:30 ... Cornelius before Peter came

13:2,3 ... Before and while sending forth Paul
and Barnabas

14:23 ... While appointing elders

Yes, the life and ministry of the early disciples were prayer-saturated.

- The voyage of Paul and Barnabas was first to Cyprus (Acts 13:4)

Interestingly it was the homeland of Barnabas (4:36).

Another city in their first journey was Perga (13:13)

That was the home-area of Paul (Tarus, etc)

- We witness a power encounter of the Team with a sorcerer (vv6-12).

A similar encounter in Philip's outreach ministry was witnessed in Acts 8:9-24.

When we pray for Missionaries, we must ask God for supernatural things to happen in their ministries. That's how the enemy can be silenced.

Sorcery, witchcraft and magic are simply too common among primitive tribes because they are under the bondage of superstitious beliefs.

- We have the first sermon of Apostle Paul in this chapter (13:16-47). His knowledge of the Old Testament and the fulfilment of the Messianic promises in Jesus is amazing.

He quotes from Psalms (Acts 13:33/Psa 2:7; v35/Psa 16:10) and Isaiah (v34/Isa 55:3; v47/Isa 42:6; 49:6) and Habakkuk (v41/Hab 1:5).

He mentions the Resurrection of Jesus thrice in this sermon (vv30,34,37). Any evangelistic message which does not include Resurrection is hollow (Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 15:3,4).

- When the Jews opposed what Paul and Barnabas spoke, they said, *“We spoke the Word of God to you first; but because you reject it, we turn to the Gentiles”* (Acts 13:45,46).

So far, the name of Barnabas preceded that of Paul, but from now on it becomes “Paul and Barnabas” (Compare v2 with vv43,46,50). Paul takes the lead (v45; 14:12). Leadership is not simply by seniority but by spiritual endowment.

- The Synagogue ministry of Paul teaches us how Revival and Evangelism should go hand in hand —
Damascus (9:20), Pisidian Antioch (13:14), Iconium (14:1), Thessalonica (17:1), Berea (17:10), Corinth (18:4), Ephesus (18:19; 19:8).
- Following persecution the missionaries were *“filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit”* (v52).

Acts Chapter 14

God’s miracle power

This Chapter has two parts —

vv1-18 ... Miracle and paganism in Lystra

vv19-28 ... Strengthening new converts

- This is a chapter of contrasts —

- 1) v2 ... Opposition
v3 ... Staying on! (*therefore !!!*)
- 2) vv2,3 ... Staying on in spite of opposition
vv5,6 ... Fleeing out because of opposition

Guidance of the Spirit.
Flexibility! Variety of leading!
Not sameness always.
Yesterday’s manna!

- 3) vv5,6 ... Brickbats in Iconium
vv11-13 ... Bouquet in Lystra
- 4) v13 ... Willing offer of garland, etc.
vv14,15 ... Stern rejection of the offer
- 5) v18 ... People of Lystra so much enamoured
v19 ... People of Lystra (same) so much against
- 6) v19 ... Dragged Paul out thinking “dead”
v20 ... Encircled Paul expecting to “raise”
- 7) v22 ... Tribulation — Suffering (2 Tim
... Kingdom — Glory 2:11,12)
(Compare Jn 3:1-5)

Forces of nature for complete sweep		“ <i>Water</i> ” (Word) x World — (Lk 8:14) + “ <i>Wind</i> ” (Spirit) x World — (Js 4:4-5)
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- The miracle of healing at Lystra gives us several lessons —
 - + The praises of men are a great snare —

“The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men” (Acts 14:11)

The apostles handled it superbly well (vv14-16)

Read 12:21-24 where Herod miserably failed in a similar situation —

“The voice of a god and not of a man” (v22)

Don’t be too puffed-up at men’s song & praise!
Don’t be too pushed-down at men’s stones & persecution!

People will shout, “Hosannah,” today,
but, “Crucify,” tomorrow!

Paul’s exemplary life (2 Cor 6:8-10)
- Stephen’s vision & Paul’s vision

(7:56-58)	(14:19-20/2 Cor 12:1-4)
A.D. 45	A.D. 60
- Stephen stoned in Acts 7.
Paul raised in Acts 9.

Paul stoned in Acts 14.
Timothy comes up in Acts 16:1,2.
Timothy was an eyewitness
of Paul’s stoning at Lystra! (2 Tim 3:10,11)

Supplement to Acts 14:8-10

Book of Acts full of the Supernatural and Miracles —

- | | | | |
|-----|----|-----|--|
| Ch. | 1 | ... | Christ's Ascension |
| | 2 | ... | Outpouring of the Spirit |
| | 3 | ... | Lame healed by Peter and John |
| | 4 | ... | Place shaken following prayer |
| | 5 | ... | Judgment of death on Ananias & Sapphira |
| | 6 | ... | Wonders and miracles by Stephen |
| | 7 | ... | "Heavenly" death of Stephen |
| | 8 | ... | Demon-casting, healing in Samaria — Philip |
| | 9 | ... | Saul's Conversion |
| | 10 | ... | Vision to Peter + Cornelius, Outpouring |
| | 11 | ... | Revelation to Prophet Agabus |
| | 12 | ... | Peter's deliverance from prison |
| | 13 | ... | Blinding of the Sorcerer, Bar-jesus |
| | 14 | ... | Healing of a cripple in Lystra |
| | 16 | ... | Vision in Macedonia, demon-casting from a
sooth-saying girl, earthquake in the jail, etc. |
| | 18 | ... | Vision to Paul in the night |
| | 19 | ... | Miracles through Paul's clothes |
| | 20 | ... | Young man Eutychus raised to life! |
| | 21 | ... | Prophecy by Agabus |
| | 27 | ... | Storm in the sea, heavenly visitor |
| | 28 | ... | Venomous snake-bite harmless to Paul |

Acts Chapter 15

No more under the Law!

A chapter of “DISPUTES”

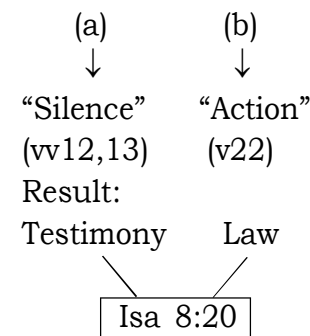
- (a) Local Church and outsiders (vv1,2)
Paul and Barnabas with the Judaizers
(v2) *“no small dissension”*
- (b) Within a local Church (vv3-35)
Among the apostles & elders in Jerusalem
(v7) *“much disputing”*
- (c) Between two mobile ministers (vv36-41)
Between Paul & Barnabas on John Mark
(v39) *“contention so sharp”*

Lessons from each dispute/incident

- (1)** Beware of false doctrines from outside (2 Jn 8-11)
Last day sign — Women — etc. (2 Tim 3:1,6-17)
Be Bereans (Acts 17:11)
- (2)** Three Jameses in the Bible —
 - + Son of Zebedee (Mt 10:2)
Brother of John
Mount of Transfiguration
 - + Son of Alphaeus (Lk 6:15)
 - + Foster brother of Jesus (Mt 13:55)
↑
1 Cor 15:7
Gal 1:19
Js 1:1

- (a) Peter — Based on the happenings he witnessed
(Acts 15:7-9)

- (b) James — Based on the Scriptures (vv14-18,21)



(3) Why Paul refused to take John Mark?

- + “Work” aspect (Acts 15:38)
- + Possible leniency by Barnabas
due to filial relationship (Col 4:10)
Barnabas was *“determined”* (Acts 15:37)
whereas Paul *“thought”* (v38)
- + Inclination towards Peter’s message & ministry
Peter’s convert (1 Pet 5:13)
Peter’s visit often (Acts 12:12)
Peter’s thought + Mark’s Gospel ... similar

Blessings of this separation

- + Two missionary expeditions than one!
- + Silas, an authority from the “mother” Church,
a good company! (Acts 15:22)
- + Repentance of Mark by Paul’s severity and
Barnabas’ softness (2 Tim 4:11/*Good helper*)
Acts 13:5
Theme of Mark’s Gospel — “The Servant!”

Acts Chapter 16

Open doors & Closed doors

- Two additions to Paul's Team —
 - 1) TIMOTHY (vv1-3)
 - Paul's own *son in faith* (1 Tim 1:2)
 - Trained in local Church situations right in Paul's time
 - Corinth (1 Cor 4:17; 16:10)
 - Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3)
 - Philippi (Phil 2:19)
 - Thessalonica (1 Thess 3:2,6)
 - Paul's closest and best representative
 - (1 Cor 4:17; Phil 2:19,20)
 - Paul's right hand!
 - Farewell letter was to Timothy (2 Tim 4:5-7)
 - 2) LUKE (v10 cf vv4,6,7) ... "*they ... they ... we*"
 - Never deserted Paul (2 Tim 4:11)
 - (though didn't stay with him permanently)
- Circumcision of Timothy (Acts 16:3)
 - Not on doctrinal grounds
 - + v4/15:1,24,29
 - + Titus was not! (Gal 2:3-5)
 - + 16:30-31 ... THE plan of salvation
 - To become all things to all men
 - (1 Cor 9:19-22)
 - (Rom 9:1-5) ← Great concern for Jews

- Occurrence of the word "*immediately*"
or "*straightaway*" in this Chapter
 - (1) v10 — Obedience to guidance
"RESULTS"
↓
 - (2) v18 — Manifestation of God's power
 - (3) v26 — Deliverance from Above
 - (4) v33a — Physical needs ministered unto
 - (5) v33b — Spiritual fruits/Fulfilment of righteousness
- Lessons on guidance
 - Reasons for closure of doors cannot be always revealed or understood (vv6-8)
 - Closure of one door will mean opening of other doors! (vv14,16,33)
 - God's Will not to be confirmed by the favourableness or unfavourableness of circumstances ...
 - Favourable wind (v11/20:6)
 - Unfavourable (vv22-24)
- Faith
 - Without works (v17)
 - With works (vv15,34)
↑
The spirit of sharing in the Philippian Church
(Phil 4:10,14-16)
- Mode of supernatural manifestation
 - Sometimes noisy (Acts 16:26/Ex 20:18-21)
 - Sometimes silent
(Acts 5:19,20; 12:7,10/1 Ki 19:11,12)

General

- Church growth must be both quantitative and qualitative (Acts 16:5; 9:31).
- In obedience to the Great Commission, the apostles kept moving to other directions when God closed one door. God leads both by open doors and closed doors (16:6-10; Rev 3:7; Isa 22:22).
- Several small prayer gatherings in woods, riverbanks or seashore have given birth to huge Missions (Acts 16:13-15). Lydia was the first European convert!
- The greatest answer to the greatest question (vv30,31)

Acts Chapter 17

Jews & Greeks

Paul’s Second Missionary journey continues ...

- Credentials for Jesus and the Apostles —
“Behold the world ... after Him” (Jn 12:19)
“You have filled ... with your doctrine” (Acts 5:28)
“Turned the world upside down” (Acts 17:6)
- The global dimension in Paul’s vision —
Acts 17:6 ... *turned the world ...*
:24 ... *God made the world*
:26 ... *every nation ...*
:30 ... *all men everywhere*
:31 ... *He will judge the world ...*
- The King-concept in Paul’s message — (17:7)
He develops this theme elaborately while writing to Thessalonians (v1)

Phase I →	1 Thess 1:10	Glory of Second Coming
	2:19,20	
	3:13	
	4:16-18	
	5:23	
Phase II →	2 Thess 1:7-10	
	2:7,8	

- Lessons from Bereans — (Acts 17:10-12)
 1. Study the Old Testament as the foundation
(Jn 5:46,47)
 2. Search the Scriptures, not just reading
 3. Receive with a ready/open mind

A life of faith (Rom 10:17)

- “Greek philosophers” — (Acts 17:18)

No Faith in the immortality of soul	“Stoics”	— Obey your conscience. God is unknown/ unknowable. But God is not denied.
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“Epicureans” — Eat, drink, be merry,
for tomorrow we die!

Similar philosophies are in the air in every nation. The close and consistent study of the Word of God will keep us against contaminating our minds.

General

- Paul reached both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 17:2,17,22). His main message was, “*Jesus is the Christ!*” (v3).
- His message appealed to both commoners and the elite (vv4,12,34). He preached with the conviction that “*the Gospel is the power of God for salvation*” (Rom 1:16; Col 3:11).

- India is like the Athens of Paul’s day. We must patiently explain the Gospel to our idol-worshipping neighbours (Acts 17:16,17).
- Paul’s sermon in Athens gives us a good outline for our public preaching (vv22-31).
Study it closely.

Acts Chapter 18

Partners for God's Servants

- Upto v22, continuation of the second missionary journey which began in 15:36
v23 onward, the third missionary journey.
- Athens — Centre of Culture
Corinth — Centre of Commerce (wealth + wickedness)
Capital of Greece

Ministry:

Athens — Highly intellectual, philosophical message
— Results not very encouraging (17:32-34)

Corinth — Weakness, fear, trembling, etc. (1 Cor 2:1-5)

- Paul's Partners —
 - + Helper partners — Aquila & Priscilla (Acts 18:2)
 - + Minister partner — Apollos (v24)
 - + Brother partner — Sosthenes (v17/1 Cor 1:1,2)
- Aquila & Priscilla
 - + Transmission of truths (Acts 18:26/2 Tim 2:2)
 - + Sacrificial help for the minister & ministry
(Rom 16:3,4)
 - + Supporting Church planters
(Rom 16:5/1 Cor 16:19)
 - + Good husband-wife ministerial relationship
(always mentioned together)
(Rom 16:3/1 Cor 16:19/2 Tim 4:19)

- Paul's exemplary behaviour in Corinth:

- (1) In finance (Acts 18:3)
(2 Cor 11:7-9)

But ministers should be supported!
(1 Cor 9:7-18)

- (2) In baptising (Acts 18:8)
(1 Cor 1:14-16)

Because of their tendency to sectarianism!
Silas & Timothy must have baptised others.

But believers must be baptized!

Compare Jn 1:33 “John the Baptist”
“Paul the Apostle”

- Two strange and encouraging incidents!
 - + Preaching in the house adjacent to the synagogue
(Acts 18:6,7)
 - + Both the first chief ruler and his successor got converted
(vv8,17)
- Apollos
 - + A talented orator willing to learn
from a congregational member (vv24-26)
 - + Moved with the “Body” concept
in spite of his personal ability + wit (v27)
 - + Spirit of cooperation with the other ministers!
(1 Cor 3:4-9)
(Tit 3:13,14)

We need selfless seniors like Aquila & Priscilla to help
make up young ministers to reach excellence.

Acts Chapter 19

Explosion in Ephesus

- Continuation of Paul's third Missionary Journey, commencing from 18:23
- Ephesus, as Athens, very similar to India

Conditions

- + Many Christians (in India) not Spirit-filled (vv1-7)
- + Exorcism, Black magic, Counterfeits, etc. (vv13-19)
- + Idolatry, Idol-making, ... (vv22-28)
- + Secular government influenced to interfere in religious matters (vv34-41)

Remedy

- + Lead the Church into Spirit's fire (v6)
- + Teach & found the disciples strong in faith (vv9,10a)
- + Pray for genuine and irresistible miracles (vv11,12)
- + Be bold (vv30,31)
- "Jesus I know!" ... (19:15) ... "Paul I know!"
(COMPARISON)
 - + Heb 12:2,3 — Persecution — 2 Cor 11:23-25
13:12,13
 - + Mt 8:20 — Pilgrimage — 1 Cor 9:4
 - + Jn 14:10 — Absolute
dependence — 2 Cor 3:5

- + Jn 19:10,11 — Recognition
of Heaven's — Phil 2:9-11
authority
- + Lk 4:43 — Unreached — Rom 15:21
Jn 10:16
- + Jn 12:24 — Death — 1 Cor 15:31

General (Acts 19)

- A question for each believer —
v2a, "*Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?*"
- The deficient knowledge about the Holy Spirit explains the ills in the Church (v2b)
- Sustained Bible teaching strengthens believers against the winds of false doctrines and philosophies —
vv9,10, "*Teaching the disciples daily for 2 years*"
- Voluntary burning of magical stuff is witnessed in mission fields when God's power manifests in a large scale (vv18,19)
- Revivalism in other religions is usually a reaction to Christian work (vv23-35)
- A prayer: "O Lord, let Acts 19 repeat in India!"

Acts Chapter 20

Exhortations to Elders

- Paul's third Missionary Journey continues ...
 - The Supper (v7)
The Scripture (vv7b,9,11,20,27,32)
The Servant (vv18-35)
The Sheep (vv7,17,28,32)
 - The SUPPER
For believers only Acts 2:41,42
20:7
No unbelievers 1 Cor 10:16,17
entertained 2 Cor 6:14-18
 - The SCRIPTURE
 - + Unhurried, patient meditation (vv7,9,11)
 - + Impartial study (vv20,27)
 - + Broken heart (vv31/Isa 66:2)
 - The SERVANT
 - + *Serving God with humility, tears, etc.*
(vv19,22-25)
 - + *Declaring the whole counsel of God.*
(vv20,21/26,27)
↑ (eg. Lk 7:30)
 - + *Coveting no man's silver, ...* (vv33-35)
(1 Sam 12:1-4)

Also, comparison of "PAUL & JESUS"

(Last Chapter study) 19:15

(Note also Paul's definiteness for his course of actions — vv3,13,16)

See, *"The lives of Paul & Jesus,"*
Chapter 190 of *"Bible Pearls."*

- The SHEEP
Various names —
 - + *The gathering of disciples* (Acts 20:7)
 - + *The Church* (v17)
 - + *The Flock* (v28)
 - + *The Church of God* (v28)
 - + *All the sanctified* (v32)
- "The first day of the week"
Why?
Resurrection (Mt 28:1)
Pentecost (Lev 23:15,16)
Early Church (1 Cor 16:2)

But no definite commandment to observe any particular day. *Liberty* in the LORD (Rom 14:5,6)

Acts Chapter 21

Journey to Jerusalem

- Tyre — Caesarea — Jerusalem
v3 v8 v15
- Ministry of women (v9)
 - Acts 2:16-18 — Last days outpouring
 - 1 Cor 14:33-35 — Interrupting prohibited
 - 1 Tim 2:11,12 — Teaching/Usurping authority
over men prohibited
- Warnings to Paul by the Spirit —
 - + Acts 20:22,23 ... *Chains in every city*
 - + Acts 21:4 | Not to go to Jerusalem
 - + Acts 21:10,11 |
- Paul's failure
 - Jew-Gentile issue (Acts 21:24,25 / Gal 3:19,28,29)
(Gal 2:11-14 — Rebuking Peter!)
 - Temple + sacrifices
(Mt 23:37,38; 27:50,51; Jn 4:21)

The deep-seated law and rituals in the hearts of even Peter & Paul!

No wonder Jerusalem was utterly destroyed and Jews scattered all over!

 - Unfruitful “tactics” (vv26,27)
The 7-day purification in the Temple
- Reasons for Paul's failure by ignoring the Spirit's warning —

- + Personal likes (18:18-21; 20:16; 21:13,14)
 - + Excessive enthusiasm (for Israel's salvation)
(21:20,21; Rom 9:3)
- Can't go to Cine-theatres to win Cinema-goers!
Can't go through a tradition to win a nominal!
- + Regard for public opinion (v24)
- At the same time we cannot say that Paul was totally wrong in going to Jerusalem against the Spirit's warning ... God seemed to have honoured it (23:11)
- he "Nazarite" vow —
- "Dedicated" ... "Consecrated"
- Not binding on all Jews,
but chosen by individuals for a special service —
(Num 6:13-21)
- a) Temporary — (Acts 21:23,24)
 - b) Permanent — Samson (Judg 13:3-5)
— Samuel (1 Sam 1:11,28)
— John the Baptist (Lk 1:13-17)
- Not to confuse with "Nazarene" —
- Mt 2:23 ... Not recorded anywhere in the OT,
but only spoken.
- Acts 24:5 ... The sect of Nazarenes
i.e. They rejected Jewish religion
and followed the teachings of
Jesus the Nazarene.

Acts Chapter 22

Paul's Testimony

Paul testifying before the mob in Jerusalem.

- Pattern of a good testimony
 1. Past life (vv3-5) Do you have a
 2. Conversion (vv6-16) definite testimony
 3. Ministry (vv17-21) like this?
- Repetition of Paul's Jewish heritage in the Epistles:
 - Romans (10:1-3)
 - 2 Corinthians (11:22)
 - Galatians (1:13,14)
 - Philippians (3:4-6)
 - 1 Timothy (1:12,13)

Lesson:

Such introduction in testimony by converted nominal Christians to non-Christians will be meaningless. A simple explanation of the Gospel as to how it has affected our lives will be most suitable.

- Three records of Paul's conversion
 - + Acts 9:1-8 — By Luke
 - + Acts 22:6-21 — By Paul before the Jews
 - + Acts 26:12-18 — By Paul before Agrippa

Such repetitions help for complementing.

e.g.) Details of Ananias (9:10/22:12)
"Hearing" the voice (9:7/22:9)

- The purpose of God's choice (22:14,15) —
 - 1) To "know" Him — Knowledge
By despising our heritage & human wisdom (Phil 3:8)
 - 2) To "see" Him — Worship
"The Just One!"
(i.e. without holiness no man can see Him.
Worship with the beauty of holiness.)
By offering unto Him
(Compare Mt 2:11,12/Gen 22:5)
 - 3) To "hear" Him — Obedience
By surrendering ourselves to His Word
(1 Sam 15:22)
 - 4) To be His "witness" — Service
By setting aside our temporal needs as secondary.
(Mt 6:33,34)
(Mt 8:21,22)

Acts Chapter 23

Jerusalem or Rome!

- Ch 22 — Paul before the mob in Jerusalem
Ch 23 — Paul before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem



The 5th time Sanhedrin meets for such examination —

1. Jesus (Lk 22:66-71)
2. Peter + John (Acts 4:5-7)
3. Apostles (Acts 5:21)
4. Stephen (Acts 6:12,13)

- v1, “Good conscience”

Paul’s similar testimony and emphasis elsewhere —

Acts 24:16 ... *Strive to have ...*
Rom 9:1 ... *my conscience witnessing*
1 Cor 4:4 ... *The Lord judges me*
2 Cor 1:12 ... *Testimony of our conscience*
4:2 ... *conscience in God’s sight*
1 Tim 1:5 ... *Pure heart... good conscience*
:19 ... *faith and good conscience*
3:9 ... *faith and pure conscience*
4:2 ... *conscience seared*
2 Tim 1:3 ... *serve with a pure conscience*
Heb 9:9,14 ... *perfect service ... conscience*
10:2,22 ... *No conscience of sins*
13:18 ... *good conscience ...*
honourable life

- Acts 23:5, “*Speak not evil of the ruler*”

eg) Miriam & Aaron/Moses (Num 12:1-10)

Michael/Moses’ body (Jude 8,9)

Because, Ezek 28:14,15

Also 2 Pet 2:9-11

- Acts 23:6, “*Resurrection*” —

The most important witness of early believers ...

Acts 1:22; 2:32; 3:15; 4:10; 4:33; 5:30; 10:40,41
13:30,31; 17:31,32; 1 Cor 15:14,17

- Acts 23:9, “*Let us not fight against God*”

Similarly, Gamaliel, a Pharisee, in Acts 5:34,38,39

Through the Bible —

Gen 6:3 ... *My Spirit shall not strive*

Prov 29:1 ... *often reprov’d*

Mt 21:42,44 ... *stone ... break ... grind*

Acts 7:51 ... *stiffnecked*

- Acts 23:11, “*Be of good cheer!*”

Other instances — 18:9,10

27:23,24

God of all comfort (2 Cor 1:3-5)

We will not die before His purposes are accomplished in our lives! It matters not whether we are in Jerusalem or in Rome!

Acts Chapter 24

“Resurrection of the dead”

- Fight between two kingdoms

Paul	Ananias	— High Priest	(v1)
	Tertullus	— Orator	(v1)
	Jews	— Law	(v9)
	Felix	— Governor	(v10)

- Accusations —

Against Paul (vv5,6)

1) *A pestilent fellow*

— sweeping fatal disease
Acts 17:6

2) *A mover of sedition* (stir)

— Revival!
Acts 2:12

3) *A ringleader of the sect of Nazarenes*

Acts 5:28

4) *A profaner of the Temple*

— Tradition-breakers!
Acts 7:47-50

Against Jesus

(Jn 12:18,19)
“*The world after Him*”

Mt 8:34

“*They begged Him to leave*”

Jn 19:19

Nazareth — A Name of contempt

Mt 26:59-61

“... *destroy Temple* ...”

- Paul’s defence (testimony) (Acts 24:11-21)

1) *I confess* — Public proclamation ...
No secrecy

2) *I worship* — God (of my Fathers)

3) *I believe* — The Scripture

4) *I hope* — Resurrection

“Resurrection” —

The most important witness of early believers ...

1:22 / 2:32 / 3:15 / 4:10 / 4:33 / 5:30 /

10:40,41 / 13:30,31 / 17:31,32 / 1 Cor 15:14,17

5) *I exercise* — Clean, godly life

- Paul’s message to Felix (Acts 24:25)

Compare Jn 16:8-11	1. <i>Righteousness</i> —	Free gift from God through Christ (Rom 10:3)
	2. <i>Temperance</i> —	Responsive life with fruits (eg. Gal 5:22,23)
	3. <i>Judgment</i> —	Future reward at Second Coming

(These are three stages of Christian life).

Paul did not soft-pedal even before the Governor! (2 Tim 4:2)

- Enemies for a committed life — (Felix)

+ Indecisiveness (Acts 23:35/24:22)

+ Procrastination (24:25)

+ Corruption (bribe) (v26)

+ Popularity (People’s opinion) (v27)

Jn 5:44; 12:42,43

Acts Chapter 25

Standing before Kings

- Paul's arrest did only give him golden opportunities to testify before VIPs —
 - + Ch. 22 — Before the mob in Jerusalem
 - + Ch. 23 — Before the Sanhedrin
 - + Ch. 24 — Before Felix (Caesarea)
 - + Ch. 25:6 — Before Festus
 - + 25:22,23 — Before King Agrippa
and the VIPs of the town
- Two reasons God permitted imprisonment for Paul —
 - + Testimony to prisoners and jailors (Phil 1:13)
 - + Epistles to Churches
- God's very plan for Paul's life —

ACTS 9:15

A chosen vessel —



- Paul's attitude before his examiners similar to that of Jesus before His —

24:24,25	Jn 18:21	— High Priest
(Message to Felix)	:33-38	— Pilate
25:9-12	19:9-11	— Pilate
(Legal rights)		

- Lessons from Paul's defence —
 - (a) *"I am not against the Law"* (Acts 25:8a)
We are no more under the Law but we are not against the Law which is holy (Rom 6:14; 7:12).
 - (b) *"I am not against the Temple"* (Acts 25:8b)
We are not against Church traditions but they cannot replace the Word of God (Mt 15:6b).
 - (c) *"I am not against Caesar"* (Acts 25:8c)
We may not agree with the philosophies and beliefs of the rulers but we will obey them for conscience sake (Rom 13:1-5).
 - (d) *"I am not against the Jews"* (Acts 25:10b)
We call the nominal Christians to repent but we are not against them (Rom 9:1,2; 10:1,2).

Acts Chapter 26

“Words of Truth and Reason”

(v25b)

- Paul before Agrippa

|
(v2)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| — Herod the great
(great grandfather) | — | Mt 2:3,16
Slaughter of babies |
| — Herod Antipas
(uncle) “fox” | — | Mk 6:17,18,23-28
Beheading John the Baptist.
Mocking Jesus at trial. |
| — Herod Agrippa (I)
(father) | — | Acts 12:1-3
:21-23
Slew James and
attempted to kill Peter. |

- v14, “Hebrew language”

- “Salvation is of the Jews” (Jn 4:22)
- Paul, “Hebrew of Hebrews” (Phil 3:5)

“kicking against the pricks” (Acts 9:5)

↑
A proverb

Similar usage Dt 32:15; 1 Sam 2:9,10

“LET US NEVER WORK AGAINST GOD’S PURPOSES!”

- Five duplets (Acts 26:16-18)

1. Our calling

“a minister”

↑
To God

“a witness”

↑
To people

2. Our message

“things seen”

↑
Past Experience

“things to be revealed”

↑
Future knowledge
on maturity

3. Our problem

“(Jewish) people”

↑
Those within

“gentiles”

↑
Those without

4. Our ministry

“opening the eyes”

“darkness” → “light”

↑
Illumination

“Satan” → “God”

↑
Deliverance

5. Our promise

“forgiveness of sins”

↑
forgiveness

“Inheritance among saints”

↑
fellowship

- v18 ... Soulwinning

1. Conviction (2 Cor 4:4-6)
2. Repentance (Col 1:13; Eph 5:8)
3. Deliverance
4. Assurance
5. Fellowship (Col 1:12; 1 Pet 2:9)

Comparable to Acts 2:37-42

Tribal ministry

1. Blindness — Superstition, etc.
2. Bondage — Evil spirits, fear, ...
3. Blessing — Guilt removed

Acts Chapter 27

Shipwreck on Malta Island

- A voyage undertaken by the “*will of God*” (Rom 1:10)
- Luke, a real historian & newsreporter.

eg) The detailed account of this voyage!
Hence (Lk 1:1-4)

Also, as a physician, he must have been known
for taking down the history of patients!

- It is now more than two years since Paul was kept
a prisoner before going to Rome (Acts 24:27)
- Rome, a very important place.
“All roads lead to Rome!” — A proverb

Paul was earnestly praying for the believers in Rome —
(Rom 1:8-15) (Perhaps during these 2 years)

- Principles we learn from this chapter —

(1) Principle of length of life

“A believer cannot die, except by the will
of God, before God’s time, if he is fully
submitted to Him.”

eg) Beheading of John the Baptist.
The “WORD-VOICE” concept.

WORD → Substance of the voice

VOICE → Vehicle of the Word.

The voice dies leaving the Word.

- (2) Principle of God’s mercy on our surrounding.**
God saves a nation or a city because of a
few godly ones.

eg) Abraham (Gen 18:23-33)

(3) Principle of Faith

“The nature of faith should vary according to
situations.”

a) Resisting Faith —

(Lk 8:22-25) — Tempest in the sea

(Mt 4:1-11)— Temptations in the wilderness

b) Enduring Faith —

(Acts 27) — Tempest in the sea

(2 Cor 12:7-10) — Thorn in the flesh

c) Hiding Faith —

(Mt 2:13) — Baby Jesus from Herod’s fury

(1 Sam 22:1/Psa 57:1) —

David from Saul’s fury

That is —

a) Learning the power in Jesus’ Name

b) Learning the purposes of God in our life

c) Learning the protection of God upon us

Discerning ‘what is what’ is as difficult as trying to
find whether a coconut with shell is good or bad!

Acts Chapter 28

From Inland to Island

This Chapter has two sections —

- a) Paul's ministry on the island of Malta (vv1-10)
- b) Paul's ministry at Rome (vv11-31)

(a) Observations in the ministry at Malta

- Paul didn't have a plan to go to Malta. He was there as a victim of circumstances. God in His wisdom ordered a tempest called, "*Euroclydon*" which changed the direction of their voyage (27:14). God included a remote tribal island in His missionary programme! Do not be over-perturbed when your missionary-evangelistic programmes are providentially changed.
- The tribespeople, not in the mainstream civilization, are generally more hospitable than the city-dwellers (28:2,7,10).
- Paul was down-to-earth a practical missionary with folded sleeves! (v3a). Those looking for white-collar jobs must not enter missionary work.
- Not always but when necessary, God performs the signs of "*taking up snakes and drinking poison*" (vv3-6; Mk 16:18). Healing was common in the apostolic ministry (Acts 28:7-9).
- When people do not know the true and living God, they would attribute anything sensational or supernatural to "gods!" Examples —

- Acts 12:21-25 ... Herod's oration
- 14:8-11 ... Miracle at Lystra
- 28:6 ... Excitement of natives

Though this is inevitable, the servants of God should be extremely cautious against attracting people towards themselves. Ours is a jealous God who won't share His glory with anyone.

(b) Towards Rome

- Meeting with Christian believers in Missionary journeys is always an encouragement to tired Missionaries (28:15).

Why the story abruptly stops in v31?

- There is no end for "ACTS"!

What Jesus began ... the disciples continued
(Acts 1:1)

What the apostles began ... we are to continue!

Note: *preaching* ...
(v-31)

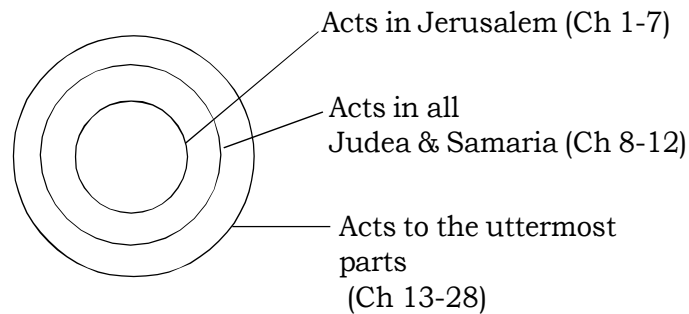
teaching ...

no one forbidding ...

A triumphant word
(Rev 3:8/Mt 16:18)

- Acts is not the story of a missionary (Peter or Paul), but a missionary programme (i.e. Acts 1:8 the key)

Story: “How they brought the Gospel from Jerusalem the political capital to Rome the religious capital”



■ An Outline by Missionary Thomas Walker (1715-1794)

Ch 1-7 — Witnesses in Jerusalem

- 1 First preparations — Witnesses prepared
- 2 First ingathering— Witnesses anointed
- 3 First miracle — Witnesses accredited
- 4 First conflict — Witnesses threatened
- 5 First stripes — Witnesses beaten
- 6 First deacons— Witnesses multiplied
- 7 First martyr — Witnesses persecuted

Ch 8-12— Witnesses in all Judea & Samaria

- 8 A new advance : Samaria
- 9 A new apostle : Paul
- 10 A new departure : Cornelius (Gentile)
- 11 A new centre: Antioch
- 12 A new struggle : Herod

Ch 13-28 — Witnesses unto the uttermost

□ *First Missionary Journey of Paul (S.E. Asia Minor)*

- 13 A missionary call
- 14 A missionary circuit (Antioch → Antioch)
- 15 A missionary conference

□ *Second Missionary Journey (Eastern Europe)*

- 16 3 Typical converts (Timothy, Lydia, Jailor)
- 17 3 Typical cities (Thessalonica, Berea, Athens)
- 18 3 Typical experiences
(Leaving Jewish Synagogue, A Vision,
Arrest & beating)

□ *Third Missionary Journey (Rome, Asia)*

- 19 A missionary centre (Ephesus)
- 20 A missionary charge
(To Ephesian Elders against false teachers)
- 21 A missionary crisis (uproar in Jerusalem)

□ *Fourth Missionary Journey or Voyage to Rome*

- 22 Witnessing to the people
- 23 | Witnessing before the Council
- 24 |
- 25 Witnessing before Governors
- 26 Witnessing before Kings
- 27 Witnessing on board ship
- 28 Witnessing in a city (Rome)

■ Chronology of Paul's life and ministry

Death, Resurrection, Ascension of Christ...	A.D. 30
Conversion of Paul	... 35(?)
First subsequent visit to Jerusalem	... 37
(Gal 1:18)	
Paul at Tarsus	... 37-43
Visit to Jerusalem with the gifts from	
Antioch (Acts 11:30)	... 44
First missionary journey	... 46-48(?)
Council at Jerusalem	... 50
Second missionary journey	... 51-53
1 & 2 Thessalonians	... 52
Third missionary journey	... 54-58
Galatians	... 55
1 Corinthians	... 56/57
2 Corinthians	... 57
Romans	... 57-58
Arrest	... 58
Imprisonment at Caesarea	... 59-60
Accession of Festus	... 60
Paul arrives at Rome	... 61
Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians	... 61/62
Philippians	... 62/63

Release from first Roman Imprisonment	... 63
1 Timothy	... 64/65
Titus	... 65/66
Hebrews (assuming it is by Paul)	... 66/67
2 Timothy	... 67
Death of Paul	... 64
(Beheaded by Nero)	

- Read the entire chapter of 2 Timothy 4

The Epistle to the Romans

**Outlines of Sermons preached
in the Blessing Centre, Vellore, India,
from March to November 1983**



The Epistle to the Romans

Apostle Paul wrote 13 of the 21 Epistles in the New Testament. Romans is the longest. Paul's writings cover one fourth of the New Testament. Because Romans is the most complete exposition in the New Testament of the central truths of Christianity, it is rightly placed first among the Epistles. Another reason is that it was addressed to the Christians in the then world's capital (1:7).

Romans is both a theological treatise and a real letter at the same time. Christian writing must enlighten our minds and encourage our hearts. The readers should benefit from the scholarship of the author and at the same time be blessed with his fellowship. None other than the 16th Chapter has so much of personalness in all the NT Epistles. Romans is called the Cathedral of the Christian faith. Yes, it is a grand edifice. It represents a full expression of apostolic theology. It is like a lens through which to see all of the Scripture. Over 60 references from 14 Old Testament books are quoted in Romans. An understanding of this book is a key to unlocking the entire Bible. Several Bible scholars call this Epistle as the Constitution of Christianity.

Paul wrote Romans with nearly twenty years of understanding the Gospel and his experience as an apostle among the Churches. The three important emphases are the Righteousness of God, Salvation through Christ and Work of the Holy Spirit. The work of the Trinitarian Godhead is treated with perfect balance (1:1).

This book addresses the plight of every guilty sinner in the entire human race, laying out the whole plan of Salvation from eternity past to eternity future. As the most doctrinal book in the Bible, Romans is the clearest and most detailed explanation of the Gospel message. It brilliantly deals with Justification which is Salvation from the *penalty* of sin (3:21; 4:5; 5:1), and Sanctification which is Salvation from the *power* of sin (6:11), and Glorification which is Salvation from the very *presence* of sin (8:29,30).

The Gospel as the greatest Good News in the world is explained in this Epistle against the backdrop of the Righteousness of God (1:17; 3:21,22). Chapters 1 to 8 deal with the revelation of God's righteousness, Chapters 9 to 11 with the vindication of God's righteousness, and Chapters 12 to 16 with the application of God's righteousness. The word "righteousness" occurs 66 times in this Epistle, and the word "faith" 62 times! Yes, we are made righteous through faith on the finished work of Christ. This is the central message of Romans.

Romans is a letter to the House Churches in Rome (16:5). The congregations here consisted of both Jews and Gentiles. The visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, who were among the 3000 who got baptized on that day, must have been the founding members of the Church in Rome, and not Paul who had not visited it when he wrote this Epistle (Acts 2:10; Rom 1:8-10). Chapter 16 indicates that several Christians he came into contact during his journeys were

there. Gentiles were prominent in the Church here (1:13; 11:13, 28-31; 15:15,16). Of the 26 persons greeted in Chapter 16, two-thirds are Greek! Paul wrote with his thorough knowledge of Jewish legalism, Greek culture and the privilege of Roman citizenship. Unlike him many European and Western Christian writers cause confusion in Asian countries while dealing with social and family issues. We need to be cautious.

Rome was the capital of ancient Roman Empire. Now it's the capital of modern Italy. The name "Rome" means "strength!" Eagle was the city's symbol. In Paul's day, this city was recognized as the metropolis of the world. Jewish and Gentile Christians had different cultural ways of expressing their faith in Jesus. Paul addressed this tension between two cultural expressions of Christian faith. He desired racial reconciliation and crosscultural sensitivity. In this Epistle he sometimes addressed the Jews (2:17-29; 4:1; 7:1; etc.), and at other times the Gentiles (1:13; 11:13-32; 15:15,16; etc.). We are ashamed of the warring groups in our Churches in India due to the plague of casteism and regionalism. Hostility instead of harmony is our deadly weakness. Let's read Romans 2, 11, 14 and 15 frequently and digest its message to become what we should be. Unless we live in "peace" with one another the God of "peace" will not take our side to crush evil powers (16:20).

The Book of Romans presents the purest Gospel. It can never be read or pondered over too much. St. Augustine was converted through reading this Epistle.

Martin Luther launched the Reformation on Romans 1:17. His battlecry of five slogans, namely, "Scripture alone! Faith alone! Grace alone! Christ alone! Glory of God alone!" is from his study of Romans. John Wesley was converted while listening to someone read from Luther's commentary on Romans. Paul calls the Gospel as the *Gospel of God* (1:1; 15:16), the *Gospel of Christ* (1:9,16; 15:19,29), and the *Gospel of Peace* (10:15). He identified himself so much with it that he calls it "*my Gospel*" (16:25). He finally sealed the truth of the Gospel with his blood, being beheaded at Rome by Emperor Nero in AD 66. If a Christian does not catch the missionary vision from the Epistle to the Romans, no other appeal would propel him to go all out for God with the Gospel. My missionary challenge messages stemmed frequently from passages like 9:1-5 and 10:14,15.

No other book in the Bible explains our new life so vividly like the Book of Romans. Here it's written that (1) we are dead to sin (Ch 6) and alive to God (v11); (2) we are dead to the Law (Ch 7) and married to Christ (v4), and (3) we are dead to the flesh (Ch 8) and now led by the Spirit (v13). The Holy Spirit is referred to at least twenty times. Romans 8 is called Paul's Pentecost and it is our Personal Pentecost too. A life of obedience that pleases God is not possible without the indwelling enablement of the Holy Spirit (Ezek 36:26,27). Quoting Bishop J. B. Lightfoot, 1828-1889, an English theologian, is appropriate here: "The whole Law was given to Moses in 613 precepts (Genesis to Deuteronomy), David summarizes them in

eleven (Psa 15); Isaiah brings it down to six (Isa 33:15); Micah limits it to three (Mic 6:8); Isaiah again narrows it to two (Isa 56:1); Jesus Himself used two memorable statements (Mt 22:37-40; Lk 10:26-28); but Paul quoting Habakkuk summarises God’s plan in a single statement: “*The just shall live by faith*” (Rom 1:17; Hab 2:4). This is repeated in Galatians 3:11 and Hebrews 10:38. I preached on this theme in Revivo 1985, the 12th Annual Revival Camp of the Blessing Youth Mission for Women. The Talks are compiled as a 128-page book, titled, *Faith Life*.

The Outlines of this Epistle are developed as full-length articles and published as a 140-page book, titled, *With God again!*

The expositions of Romans have sparked many revivals in Church history as folks became aware of the magnificence of God and the miserableness of man. Paul was overwhelmed with a spirit of praise and worship as he came to the end of this Epistle. There are four “*Amens*” in the last two chapters (15:33; 16:20,24,27). It’s my prayer that as you meditate this book in detail with the outlines in the following pages, your spirit also would dance singing, “Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen!” (11:36).

Chapter Titles of Sermons

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Romans Chapter 1

Living by Faith

Introduction

Faith: the basic element in Christian Life —

- + Christians called “*believers*” — Acts 2:44; 4:32
- + Absolute necessity in pleasing God — Heb 11:6
- + First in the Trinitarian virtue — 1 Cor 13:13
- + The most protective of all armours — Eph 6:16
- + The rarest when Christ returns — Lk 18:8

(1) Faith for Salvation (Rom 1:16)

- *He who believes* ... Mk 16:16 (Jesus)
- *Believe on the Lord* ... Acts 16:30,31 (Paul)
- The great Gospel verse ... Jn 3:16 (Jesus)
- Not saved by repentance or surrender
 - ↑ So many non-Christians repent!
- Eph 2:8-9 — All of grace on God's side
All of faith on our side
- What is the Gospel?

1 Cor 15:1-5		<i>Died</i>
1 Tim 2:3-6		<i>Buried</i>
Rom 10:8,9		<i>Rose</i>
		<i>Seen</i>
- Constant remembrance and rehearsal of this faith in the Gospel necessary —
 - 1 Cor 15:1,2

(2) Faith for Sanctification (Rom 1:17)

“faith to faith ... live by ... righteousness ...”

- Faith leads to good works
 - Eph 2:10
 - 4:24 ← Righteousness + True holiness
 - ↑
 - (vv25-27, etc)
- Lay aside weight and sin!
 - Heb 12:1,2a
- How to do it practically —
 - By reading + believing the Word (Jn 15:3)
 - By rehearsing it in our life (Psa 119:9-11)

(3) Faith for Growth/Maturity (Rom 1:11,12)

“Impart ... gift ... established ... encouraged ... mutual...”

- Imparting a spiritual gift means v12!
- Growth by fellowship —
- | | | |
|------------------|---|---------------|
| 2 Tim 2:22b | — | virtue |
| 1 Cor 14:12/12:7 | — | gifts |
| Rom 14:1/15:1,2 | — | weak / strong |
| Eph 4:11-13 | — | ministers |

(4) Faith for Witness + Ministry (Rom 1:8,5)

“faith spoken of throughout the whole world”

“grace ... apostleship ... all nations”

The whole world sold out to sin —
(vv18-32)

- Faith on Christ's authority
Mt 28:18,19
*All authority in Heaven and earth ...
Go therefore ...*
 - Faith on the Spirit's power
Lk 24:46-49
Acts 1:8 ... *You shall receive power ...
My witnesses ...*
Mk 16:15-20
 - Faith on God's promises in suffering
Heb 11:13,14 ... *strangers ... pilgrims ...
:33-39a ... tortured ... mocked
... scourged ... stoned ...*
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Romans Chapter 2

God the Impartial Judge

God judges His people:

Psa 50:4-6, *"Gather My saints ... Judge"*

Heb 12:22-23, *God the Judge of all*

1 Pet 4:17, *Judgment at the House of God*

How God judges:

(1) According to the TRUTH (Rom 2:2,12)

Jn 12:47,48, *Word will judge him*

Revealed in the Law, enabled by Christ —

Jn 1:17, *Grace and Truth*

Love God + Love Man —

10 commandments/Sermon on the Mount

Js 2:8-13 ... *judged by the Law of Liberty*

(2) According to the GRACE given (Rom 2:4)

Life — Heb 10:26,29,30 ... *insulting the
Spirit of Grace*

Service — Lk 12:48 ... *To whom much is given ...*

(3) According to the HARDNESS OF HEART (Rom 2:5)

Rev 2:21,22 ... *Unless they repent ...*

Prov 29:1 ... *Often reprov'd but ...*

(4) According to the DEEDS (Rom 2:6)

Eccl 3:17 ... *judge every work ...*

12:13,14 ... *every work ... good or evil*

Sins of Commission + Omission (Mt 25:31-46)

(5) According to the GOSPEL (Rom 2:16)

Acts 17:30,31 ... *judgment of the world by Christ*

a) To live in the faith of the Gospel (Gal 2:20)

b) To testify the Gospel unashamedly (1:16; Lk 9:26)

(6) According to the CALLING (Rom 2:19-24)

2 Tim 4:1,5-8 ... *Righteous Judge* ...

Js 3:1 ... *teachers ... stricter judgment*

(7) According to INWARD PIETY (Rom 2:16,27-29)

Js 5:8,9 ... *your hearts ... Judge at the door*

Psa 7:8-10 ... *Judge according to my integrity*

Conclusion

We must judge ourselves today lest we are judged
with the world —

1 Cor 11:31,32 ... *judged ... chastened*

Psa 139:23,24 (Self examination)

“Search me, O God ...”

Romans Chapter 3

Immutability of God

Introduction

A chapter of strong questions
and emphatic answers
on the “indestructible character of God”
or the “immutability of God”

Key text: “*Let God be true but every man a liar*” (v4)

Manifestations of God’s Truthfulness

<u>Questions</u>	Character —	
	<u>of God</u>	<u>of man</u>
(1) v3	Faithfulness	Unbelief
(2) v5	Righteousness	Unrighteousness
(3) v7	Glory	Guilt of sin
(4) v31	Grace	Law
(5) vv8,25	Forbearance	Stubbornness

(1) Faithfulness of God / Unbelief of man (v3)

Num 23:19 ... *God is not a man to lie* ...

2 Tim 2:13 ... *God cannot deny Himself* ...

eg) Jn 11:21-27 :38-40	God condemns not our weakness in believing a specific promise for the situation as long as our basic faith on Him is solid. 1 Jn 5:4,5; Jn 6:28,29
---------------------------	---

(2) Righteousness of God / Unrighteousness of man

(vv5,21,22,25,26)

God does not cleanse our robe, but changes it! —

Gen 3:7,21

Isa 64:6

eg) Mt 22: 8-13 — The other men inside were not better than the one thrown out — but they were “clothed”

1 Sam 2:2,8,9 — Dunghill → Throne

(3) Glory of God / Guilt and Sin of man

(vv23,7)

(vv19,23)

Failure to glorify God is the chiefest of sins —

Rom 1:21

Rev 14:6,7

16:8,9

Every man from Adam has failed to glorify God but that hasn't diminished His glory but ours. God in His love takes us back to glory when we repent.

2 Cor 3:16-18 ... *glory to glory by the Spirit*

(4) Grace of God / Works of man

(Faith) v24 (Law) v27,28

Grace does not make the Law void (v31), but establishes it in a NEW way —

Jer 31:31-34

↑

Obedience resulting from an

a) Inward Revelation

b) Inward Relationship

c) Inward Release

i.e. God has been always gracious

— both in OT and NT — but man depended on his own strength and failed —

Ex 24:7 “We will”

x

NT — God, “I will”

(5) Forbearance of God / Continuance in sin

(v25)

(vv7,8)

Eccl 8:11,12

— There is no advantage of God's longsuffering to an unrepentant sinner.

Rom 2:4

— Repentant sinner is profited.

Isa 40:28-31

— God never grows tired of strengthening the weak and the fainting.

God's character of longsuffering cannot be changed by one million unrepentant sinners!

Romans Chapter 4

Growth in Faith

- The word “*faith*” or “*believe*” occurs over 15 times in this Chapter

How to grow in faith:

(1) REALIZE your nothingness (vv2,16a)

Both before conversion ... Lk 18:9-14

(Justification by faith)

and after ... Rom 12:3 ... *measure of faith*

i.e. Faith is from God!

He is the Author of Faith (Heb 12:2)

(2) REJOICE in God’s forgiveness (vv5-8,24,25)

Psa 32:1,2,11 ... *sin covered* ...

33:1-3 ... *Rejoice ... praise ... sing* ...

First worship in Revelation is for forgiveness

(Rev 1:5b,6)

Paul’s rejoicing + worship (1 Tim 1:12-17)

Everytime you rejoice in God’s forgiveness,
your faith in God who justifies freely is deepened!

(3) RECEIVE the Holy Spirit (seal) + flow freely with Him (v11)

Holy Spirit is our seal today (Eph 1:13,14; 4:30)

True Circumcision is of the Spirit

(Gal 5:5-6/Phil 3:3)

Building on faith is by praying in the Spirit (Jude 20)

(4) (REHEARSE) Follow the Examples of faith (vv12,23,24)

It is a relay race! Heb 11:39,40

12:1,2

Follow the faith of your leaders — Heb 13:7

(5) RELY not on your strength/ability (v19)

Neither consider your weakness nor count on
your strength.

Peter vs. Paul (Lk 22:31-34 Phil 4:13)

“*I can do*”

“*I can do thro’
Christ*”

Faith is not presumption (Acts 19:11-16)

Mt 17:19-21 = Fasting + Prayer means a fresh
denial of fleshly strength which
helps to strengthen faith and
remove unbelief.

(6) REST on God’s Promises (His Word) (v20)

Rom 10:17 — Hear it again and again

eg) Mary	Centurion	Peter
(Lk 1:38)	(Mt 8:8)	(Lk 5:5)
↑	↑	↑
Spiritual blessing	Physical blessing	Material blessing

(7) RECKON God’s Power & Faithfulness

(vv20b,21/Heb 11:11)

Man may desire to do good to us but may not
be able! But God!

The first in the list of faith champions is
“OURSELVES”!!!

Heb 11:3 — *By faith WE!!!*

And that’s on Creation!

Read the first page of the Bible often!

Conclusion

Mustard seed size of faith grows into a big tree!
(Lk 17:6; 13:19)

He is the Author and Finisher of our faith!
(Heb 12:2)

Romans Chapter 5

Blessings of Justification

Introduction:

What is Justification?

Read vv12-19

Adam disobeyed and sinned, so we are all sinners. Christ obeyed and lived righteously, so we all can receive the “gift of righteousness” through Him. This is what justification means. We are made righteous.

Adam, a negative type of Christ (v14)

Blessings of Justification

(1) Peace with God (vv1,11)

x Enmity (Adam) — Friend of God (I/Christ)
Reconciliation

(2) Grace of God (v2)

x Separation, Condemnation (Adam) —
Family of God (I/Christ)
“access” ... “stand”

(3) Glory of God (vv2-4)

x Shame (Adam) — Worshipper of God (I/Christ)
“rejoice” “glorying”

(4) Love of God (vv5-8)

x Ungodliness, Weakness (Adam) —
Beloved of God (I/Christ)

(5) Spirit of God(v5)

- x Hard, disobedient heart (Adam) —
Anointed of God (I/Christ)

(6) Life of God (vv9,10)

- x Wrath, Punishment (Adam) —
Redeemed and saved (I/Christ)

(7) Authority of God(vv17,21)

- x Slavery, Bondage (Adam) —
Prince of God (I/Christ)

Conclusion

- Justification x Condemnation
- The fallen man constantly hears —
 - a) the offer of justification by God and
 - b) the whisper of condemnation from the devil.
- Also the saint under these two forces (Rom 8:33,34)
Way to victory — Rev 12:10,11
Accuser... Blood of the Lamb...
Word of testimony

Make this confession of the seven Blessings of
Justification daily.

Romans Chapter 6

Helps & Hindrances to Holiness

Key verse: v22, “*Now set free from sin ... become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness*”

(A) HELPS to Holiness

(1) Identification (vv3-11)

(v3) *Baptism into Christ* (1 Cor 12:12,13)
↑
Placement, Going fully into.

(This is the basic of the three baptisms namely,
Baptism into Christ, Baptism in water, and Baptism
in the Holy Spirit.)

The spiritual significance of the historical fact —

Crucifixion of Christ ... *Our old man* (v6)

Death of Christ ... *Our body of sin* (v6)

Resurrection of Christ ... *Newness of life* (v4)

Ascension of Christ ... *Every blessing* (Eph 2:6; 1:3)

This is the meaning of “*bearing the marks of Jesus*”
(Gal 6:14-17)

eg) Napoleon’s captive cut off his arm which had the
enemy’s mark!

(2) Presentation (vv12,13,16-19)

Negative side: *Yield NOT TO lust and sin* (vv12,13a)
Learn to say “NO!”

Positive side: *Yield TO righteousness* (vv13b,19)
Begin to say, “YES!”

This is what Jesus did (Heb 1:9) —
Loved righteousness ... hated lawlessness

Illustrate:

- Thoughts (2 Cor 10:3-6)
 Refusal to think anything other than Phil 4:8
- Words (Js 3:8-10)
 Sinning in word is essentially against men
"We curse men"

Causes:	Bitterness	}	Js 3:14
	Envy		
	Selfishness		
Antidote:	Meekness	}	Js 3:13b,17,18
	Yieldedness		
- Deeds —
 If *thoughts* and *words* are disciplined and
 captivated, victory in *deeds* is not difficult.

(3) Continuation (v22)

"fruit"

Seed — *Old man*

Plant — *New man*

Fruit — *Holiness* (Holy man)

End — *Everlasting life* (Eternal man)

See 2 Pet 1:4-8 ...

Beginning with faith, growing in virtues,
 ending up in love ← (perfection)

(B) HINDRANCES to Holiness

(1) Misunderstanding the release from the Law (vv15,16)

We are under a new + higher law — Law of righteousness
 (v16)

NT	—	OT
Heart		Tablets
of flesh		of stone

(2) Mistaking the free receipt of Grace (5:19-6:1)

(a) For the sinner —

Grace first for forgiveness,
 and next as enablement.

(b) For the saint —

Grace first for enablement,
 and next for forgiveness if he fails (1 Jn 2:1)

Romans Chapter 7

The Law of God

Apostle Paul begins this Chapter saying,

"I speak to those who know the Law" (v1)

We will study this Chapter under three heads —

1. The character of the Law
2. The captivity of the Law
3. The cancellation of the Law

(1) Character of the Law

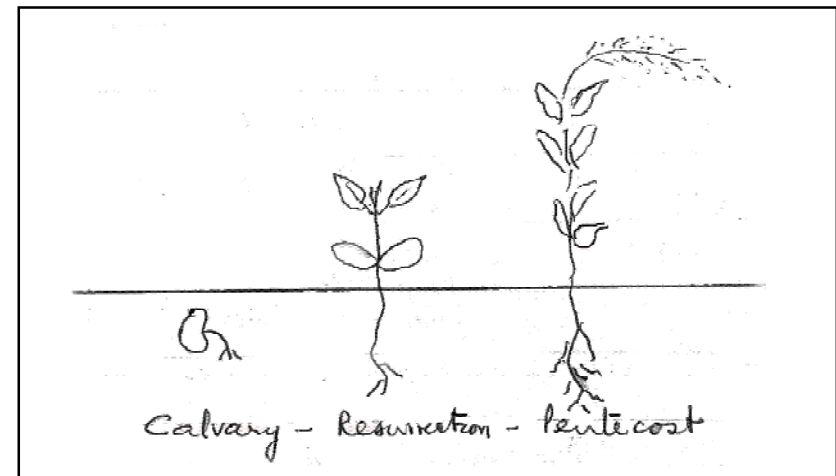
- a) *Holy* (v12a)
eg) 1 to 4 of 10 commandments (Ex 20:1-11)
- b) *Just and good* (v12b)
Just — Commandments 6 to 10 (Ex 20:13-17)
Good — Commandment 5 (Eph 6:1) (Ex 20:12)
- c) *Spiritual* (Rom 7:14)
eg) Laws of Sabbath
Laws of Festivals
Laws of Sacrifices & Worship, etc.
(The Law amplifies or explains the commdts. practically)

(2) Captivity of the Law

- a) Knowledge and guilt of sin (Rom 7:7)
- b) Deception of sin (v11)
- c) Dominion of sin (vv8,9,13-23)
- d) Destruction by sin (vv10,11)

(3) Cancellation of the Law

- a) Death (vv4a,2) (6:3)
— Baptism into His death
- b) Remarriage (vv4b,3)
— Resurrection
- c) Fruitbearing (vv4c,6)
— Newness of the Spirit (Pentecost)



From the Author's original handwritten notes

Practical Lessons

- a) Acknowledge Captivity and conflict
"O wretched man that I am!" (vv14-24a)
- b) Ask God for Deliverance
"Who will deliver me?" (v24b)
- c) Accept Emanicipation in Christ
"Through Jesus Christ our Lord" (v25)

Romans Chapter 8

Personal Pentecost

- Rom 6 — Position/Placement in Christ
7 — Problem in the inner man
8 — Provision for victory through the Holy Spirit

“The Spirit” ... 17 times in this chapter

Holy Spirit — Comforter = Helper (Gr: *Parakletos*)
The only Person on earth to make good
the benefits of Godhead!

We may title this Chapter as Paul’s Pentecost or our
Personal Pentecost!

Seven functional titles of the Holy Spirit:

(1) Spirit of LIFE — “to set free” (v2)

sin↓ (life)
(death) ↑spirit

vv3-8: Deliverance from life in the flesh
to life in the Spirit

↑
Spiritual-mindedness
Seat of true religion ↑ (Col 3:1-4)

(2) Spirit of GOD — “to indwell” (v9)

among us (OT)
God ← with us (Jesus time)
in us (Jn 14:17) (NT)

“indwell” = feel at home!

Similar usage —

1 Tim 6:16 ... *dwells in unapproachable light*
1 Cor 3:16 ← Privilege
:17 ← Responsibility | An awful fact!

Christ’s attitude towards temple abuse (Mk 11:15-17)

(3) Spirit of CHRIST — “to identify” (v9)

Reality supplied by the Spirit for the following —

- + Receiving Christ (Jn 1:12/Col 1:27)
- + Gathering in Christ’s Name (Mt 18:20)
- + Companionship in the ministry (Mt 28:18-20)

This reality is guaranteed by the Spirit
when we *walk in faith* (2 Cor 5:1,5-7)

(4) Spirit of POWER/MIGHT — “to give life/quicken” (v11)

mortal body = dying

Two attacks —

a) Sin — Refuse — Say “NO”

↑
Ability by the Spirit (vv12,13)

eg) Self-control — Fruit of the Spirit

b) Sickness — Rebuke

(5) Spirit of LEADING — “to guide” (v14)

Maturity | Children (Jn 1:12) — Rejoicing over privileges
↓
Sons — Realising the responsibilities

The Spirit leading us to —

- + all truth (Jn 16:13)
- + to holiness (1 Cor 6:11)
- + to right decisions (Acts 16:6,7)

(6) Spirit of WITNESSING — “to cheer” (vv16)

Amidst suffering (vv17-25)

eg) Acts 13:50-52

“persecution ... joy ... Holy Spirit”

(7) Spirit of ADOPTION — “to intercede” (vv15,26,27)

This is not just WE praying in the Spirit.

Note the word: “THE SPIRIT HIMSELF”

- Even the strongest saint is weak in prayer.
- It is because the Spirit Himself prays,
“ALL things work for GOOD” (v28)

See vv29,30 — HE *predestinated*

HE *called*

HE *glorified*

Hallelujah!

Conclusion (vv31-39)

- + None can condemn us (v1,33)
- + None/nothing can separate us (vv35,38,39)
- + None can conquer us (v37)

Romans Chapter 9

**God’s Sovereignty
and Man’s Responsibility**

EXAMPLES:

(1) Esau & Jacob (vv10-13)

Esau — Immediate need more important than the eternal future (Heb 12:15-17)

Jacob — Not blessed until broken (Gen 32:24-28)

(2) Moses & Pharaoh (vv15-18)

Moses — Though chosen for mercy, not permitted entrance to Canaan because of unbelief.
(Ex 33:17-20 / Num 20:12 / Dt 34:10-12)

Pharaoh — Exclusively raised for manifestation of God’s power! (v17)

(Even Satan is God’s Servant!)

Similar example

— Jesus’ delay to go to

Lazarus’ home (Jn 11:6)

(3) Abraham (vv6-9)

The son according to flesh (Abraham’s self-effort) was not given any covenant. He had to wait for God’s time and God’s way (Gen 17:17-21)

(4) Jews & Gentiles (vv30-33)

Compare Jn 1:11,12 ... *His own received Him not;
but those who believed and received Him ...*

LESSONS:

- 1) The call and choice of God must be greatly revered and respected. Any failure to live upto His expectations must be dealt with great heart concern (vv1,2,3-5)
- 2) The Word of God should not be questioned in haste at apparent failures but the real meaning of the Word must be understood with patience and by careful study (vv6-9).
- 3) The purpose of God stands independent of man's goodness or badness because of God's absolute righteousness (vv10-15).
- 4) We must desire and run but the victory is in God's hand (v16).
Examples:
Zech 4:6-9 ... Zerubbabel must shout and work
1 Cor 3:6-8 ... Paul and Apollos must labour
Prov 21:30,31 ... Horse must be prepared
- 5) We must yield ourselves unto His moulding unconditionally. He is our Potter and we are just clay. God is not answerable to us (vv19-21)
(Isa 55:6-9 ... Return to *God's thoughts*)
- 6) Nothing pleases God as an active faith on the Rock of Ages cleft for us! (vv30-33). Christ is the only ground of acceptance before God for our salvation, sanctification, supplication and service.

Romans Chapter 10

Why so many nominals in our Churches?

Introduction:

Paul explains in this Chapter how the people of Israel missed the Salvation of God.

Today's application to the nominal Christians.

Why many Christians (members) in the Church are not saved:

(1) Zeal without knowledge (v2)

= Living in sinful pleasures but a religious cloak
Isa 1:2-4 ... *Forsaken the Lord* ...
Hos 4:1,6,7 ... *My people ...rejected knowledge*
6:6,7 ... *mercy ... knowledge of God,*
not sacrifice

(2) Self-righteousness (v3)

Lk 18:9-14 Pharisee & Publican
(Self-righteous folks usually despise others, v9)

Isa 64:6 ... *Our righteousness ... filthy rags*

(3) Traditions, Laws & Creeds of the Religion (vv4,5)

Phil 3:5-8 — 7-fold boasting — These things must be *counted as loss* (v11)

Gal 1:13-16 — No consultation with flesh and blood

eg) Wait not for the family people's consent for your baptism.

(4) Unbelief in Resurrection (v9)

People of all religions believe Christ upto crucifixion.

The offence is in Resurrection only!

eg) Acts 17:22,31,32

23:6-9

Paul's warning: 1 Cor 15:13,14,17,33,34

(5) Failure to confess or heartless confession (vv8-10)

- Most of our confession not from the heart

Isa 29:13 ... *drawing near with mouth*

but hearts afar

- Most of our confession is in private
(within the Church building) and not in public

Mt 10:32 ... *Confess before men ...*

Psa 96:3-5

:8-10 — Come in to Praise!

Go out to Proclaim!

(6) Unbelieving priests and teachers (vv16,17)

Acts 20:29,30 Paul's prediction

2 Pet 2:1,2

3:3,4 Peter's prediction

:17,18

Evangelist T. L. Osborn:

Faith comes by hearing the Word of
God. Faith leaves by hearing the
word of most theologians.

(7) Disobedience and Hardheartedness (v21)

Responsive Gentiles contrasted (v20)

Procrastination:

Prov 27:1 ... *Boast not about tomorrow ...*

29:1 ... *Often reprov'd ... suddenly destroyed*

"Today is the day of salvation"

2 Cor 6:1,2 ... *Receive not God's grace in vain*

Our duty

- Constant cry in prayer for the nominals' salvation (v1)

"My heart's desire and prayer ...

Israel must be saved" (v1)

- Acts 17:17 must be our regular ministry.

"He reasoned daily with Jews and

Gentile worshippers ..."

Romans Chapter 11

God is Great!

Introduction:

v36, *“Of God, through God, and to God are all things,
to whom be glory forever!”*

- Continuation of the subject matter of the previous chapter, “Salvation of the Jews”
- Paul was hard on the Jews in Chapter 10.
In this Chapter, he seems to be hard on Gentiles.
This way the truth is balanced.

Three important lessons/truths from this Chapter:

(1) No boasting before God! (vv17,18)

- We are saved because of someone’s failure
vv12,15/Jn 1:11,12
- We are saved only by God’s goodness and mercy
vv6,7,22b,30-32/ Eph 2:8-9
- We can stand only by faith
vv20,23/1 Cor 10:11,12
- We have nothing good in ourselves
“wild branches” v24/Rom 7:18a
- Our knowledge is very limited ... v25/Rom 12:3

(2) No partiality with God! (vv21,22)

- God’s purpose in choosing Abraham or Israel was
to bless the whole world through them!
Gen 12:1-3 (Abraham the first to be called a Hebrew)

- Just like the salvation of Gentiles is by faith,
the restoration of Jews also is by faith! (vv20,23)
- He showed special love to Israel, but now He balances
it by hardening their hearts until we the Gentiles
are saved! (vv7-10,25)

(3) No mistake by God! (v29)

- God is not a man to change what He said!
Num 23:19

God made no mistake in choosing Israel.

Similarly in the creation of man —

Gen 6:5-8/Saviour right from the human race!

Gen 3:15

- His foreknowledge never fails! v2/8:29,30
- Even during times of apparent defeat,
God keeps His purposes marching on!
vv2-5/ eg) Church History
Dark ages (Rev 3:4)
Significant minority!
- Even the bypassing of Israel was a blessing to both
the groups!
To Gentile — Salvation (v12)
To Israel — Stimulation (vv11,13,14)
- He convicts all (Jew & Gentile) of disobedience that
all may partake of His free unmerited grace (vv30-32)
- “Oh!” (v33) — A call to worship this great God!
(vv33-36)

Romans Chapter 12

How to serve God acceptably

Introduction

Chapters 1-11: New Life in Christ

12-16: Service for Christ

Chapter 12 — Continuation of Chapter 11

“God is great” (11:33-36)

“Therefore” we are to serve Him acceptably —
12:1

“service” (v1)

“function” (v4)

“serving” (v11)

How to serve God acceptably:

(1) Surrender your body to the Lord (v1)

1 Cor 6:19,20 — *Body is the Temple;*
Service in the Temple.

Rom 6:16,19,22 — *Slaves of God;*
Surrendered members.

(2) Be transformed in your thinking (v2)

+ Change your attitude towards the world (v2a)
Jn 15:18,19 / Js 4:4,5

+ Make God’s will your sole aim in life (v2c)
Jn 5:30 ... *I seek the will of Father*
8:28-30 ... *I always do what pleases Him*
Acts 9:6 ... *“What do You want me to do?”*

+ Don’t have a high estimation of yourself (v3a)
Jn 1:21-23 ... *“I’m only a voice!”*

+ High things and high people (v16)
Psa 131:1-3 ... *I do not concern myself
with great matters ...*

(3) Use your gifts faithfully (vv4-8)

+ Identify your gift (v6a)
+ Don’t bury your gift (v6a)
+ Don’t exceed the limits (v6b)
+ Saturate yourself with Christian virtues (v8)
+ Respect the other gifts (vv4,5)

(4) Live in love (vv9-21)

+ No hypocrisy (v9) ... outward show.
+ Honour others (v10)
+ Share with the needy (v13)
+ Love the opposers/enemies (vv14,17-21)
+ Identify with others in their joys and sorrows (v15)

(5) Be steadfast in prayer (vv11,12)

+ “*diligence*” ... alertness, watchfulness
+ “*fervency*” ... Spiritfulness
+ “*serving*” ... Active and zealous in the Lord’s things
+ “*rejoicing*” ... Joy, praise, worship
+ “*patience*” ... No worry but prayer & thanksgiving

Romans Chapter 13

The Public Life of a Christian

vv1-7 : Responsibility to the Civil Authority

8-10 : Relationship with other citizens

11-14 : Rehearsal (Example) before other citizens

(1) Responsibility to the Civil Authority

Examples: + Parents of Jesus (Lk 2:1-6)

Nazareth → Bethlehem

Fulfilment of Prophecy (Mic 5:2)

+ Pharisees & Jesus (Mt 22:15-22)

+ Peter & Jesus (Mt 17:24-27)

Guidelines:

a) Recognize God's authority behind the Civil Govt

vv1,2/Prov 21:1

b) Realize that disloyalty or transgression leads to fear

vv3,4/Gen 3:9-11

c) Refuse to sacrifice the good conscience

for silly benefits

vv5-7/Acts 24:16 ... Income tax, etc.

Corrupt Government:

+ Fret not! (Psa 37:1-3)

+ Wait for NH & NE! (2 Pet 3:13)

(2) Relationship with other citizens

a) Owe no man! (v8)

Learn to live within your income.

+ Buy what you need, not what you want.

"Buy-now-Pay-later" schemes!

+ Plan your budget and expenses.

+ Honour God with His portion (Mal 3:8-12).

b) Avoid coming under obligations but be looking for opportunities to give

Acts 20:33-35

c) Do not do what you would not want others

do to you (v9)

eg) False witness. (We are so sensitive when accused falsely. How do we report matters about others?)

(3) Rehearsal (Example) before other citizens

"Walk properly" (v13)

Why? a) *Name of God* (Rom 2:23,24)

b) *Salvation nearer* (13:11,12)

In what? (v13)

i) Merry-making (Pleasures of this world)

"Revelry & drunkenness"

ii) Morality

"Licentiousness & lewdness"

iii) Mannerism

"Strife & envy"

Conclusion

(A) Peter who moved so closely with Jesus in His earthly life reflects His mind in his epistle:

- 1 Pet 2:9 *"We are kings"*
- :11,12 Purity in life (Rehearsal) (3)
- :13-17 Loyalty to Govt. (Responsibility) (1)
- :19-21 Love to others (Relationship) (2)

(B) The Lord's prayer

3 long petitions:

- (1) *Your will on earth AS in Heaven* — Government
- (2) *Forgive us AS we forgive others* — Love
- (3) *Lead us not... BUT deliver us from evil* — Purity

"FOR Yours is the Kingdom ... Glory!"

Romans Chapter 14

How to live with the Fellow-citizens of God's Kingdom

Kingdom — *"servants"* (v4)
(v17) *"Lord"* (vv9,11)
 "Judge" (vv10,12)

"Fellow citizens" (Eph 2:19)

(1) Receive the weak without reservation (v1)

"weak" — faith + knowledge (v2)
 — conscience(1 Cor 8:4,7)

- a) Dietary habits (v6b/1 Tim 4:1-5)
- b) Observance of days (vv5,6a/Col 2:13-17)
eg) Sabbath day — Lord's day — Etc.

Such circumferential things are not the basis of fellowship.
The basis is whether GOD has accepted or not (v3b)

The RULE: Rom 15:7

"Receive others as Christ received us!"

Hold on TO the LORD (vv6-8)/Col 2:18,19

The fellowship is IN CHRIST,
not around a doctrine!

(2) Don't put a stumbling block before others (v13)

- a) Don't eat wantonly before the weak (vv15,21,22)
- b) Avoid doing things of personal profit if it violates traditional orders ... *"approved by men"* (v18)

eg) Mt 12:1,2 — They could have avoided it.

Whatever Jesus did on the Sabbath was for the good of others.

(3) Help others grow and be strengthened (v19; 15:1,2)

- a) Don't judge the faults of others as resulting from wickedness but weakness —
14:10/15:1/5:6/6:19/Mt 26:41
- b) Teach others lovingly (patiently) to grow in faith (v23)
Eph 4:15 ... *speak the truth in love*
- c) Share the joy of the Spirit with others through worship and praise
(Rom 14:17,18)

Romans Chapter 15

How God is Glorified

Introduction

The glory of God is the

- chief purpose of creation (Gen 1:1/Psa 19:1)
- chief service of man (Rom 1:20,21)
- chief purpose of Christ's advent (Lk 2:13,14/Jn 17:4)
- chief character of Heaven (Rev 21:10,11)

How God is glorified —

(1) Through CHRIST when He redeems us to God (v7)

- + Jn 17:1-3 — Eternal life—Knowledge of true God
- + Rev 5:9,10 — Kings + Priests unto God
- ↑ ↑
- To serve Him To worship Him
- + Heb 2:9-12 — My brothers and I praising God

(2) Through CHRISTIANS when they receive one another
(vv5,6)

- + Christ's prayer (Jn 17:22)
- + Christ's pattern (Rom 15:1-3)
 - Bearing others' weaknesses (v1)
eg) Sleeping disciples, weak flesh ...
 - Helping + edifying others (v2)
eg) Peter's denials, Christ's encouragement

— Accepting injustice (v3)

v4 ← Read the Gospels to understand Christ's life.

+ Christ's power/provision through the Holy Spirit
Eph 4:1-3,7

(3) Through GENTILES when they are reached with the Gospel (vv8,9)

+ Lk 15:7 Great joy in Heaven

+ Acts 11:18 First Gentile conversion & God's glory

Note: God honours ministry among Gentiles by unusual outpouring of His Spirit.

+ Phil 2:10,11 ... *Every knee, tongue* ...

Examples:

Christ — *Other cities* (Lk 4:42,43)

— *Other sheep* (Jn 10:16)

Paul — *New places* (Rom 15:20,21)

Our responsibility for remote areas —

+ Pray (v30)

+ Pay (v27)

When we glorify God, we don't go unrewarded:

A chapter of benedictions —

1. God of Patience and Comfort (v5)

2. God of Hope (Joy + Peace) (v13)

3. God of Peace (Presence) (v33)

Romans Chapter 16

An Applaudable Church

Introduction:

• “Church” vv1,5

“Churches” vv4,16

“Mystery” v25/Eph 3:3,6; 2:20

• Marks of an applaudable Church from this chapter and others of this Epistle.

— Church at Rome (v19/1:8)

(1) Admonishing one another

15:14

All members important (v23; 11b)

Daily Exhortation (Heb 3:12,13)

Resulting from fullness

of Spirit and Scripture (Eph 5:18,19)

(Col 3:16)

(2) Appreciating the sincere

vv3-16, 21-24

Honour one another (Rom 12:10)

Esteem others better (Phil 2:3b)

Appreciation is a great incentive.

We lose nothing but others gain a lot!

(3) Assisting the needy

vv1,2

Help the *household of faith* (Gal 6:9,10)

Help the saints (Rom 12:13a)

Material help (1 Jn 3:16-19)

(4) Annunciating (Announcing) the Gospel

vv4,6,7,12,19a; 1:8

Women's active part —

Phoebe (v1), *Priscilla* (v3), *Mary* (v6),

Tryphena + *Tryphosa* + *Persis* (v12),

Mother of Rufus (v13), *Julia* + *Nereus' sister* (v15)

(5) Avoiding the false

vv17-19

Stand on the pure Gospel (1 Cor 15:1-5)

How to identify the false (1 Jn 2:26,27)

Don't even greet the false teachers (2 Jn 9-11)

(6) Adoring the Lord

vv25-27

The Church to glorify God (Eph 3:20,21)

Built to offer praise (1 Pet 2:4,5)

Sacrifice of praise (Heb 13:14,15)

(7) Abating the Enemy

v20

Church vs. Gates of Hell (Mt 16:18)

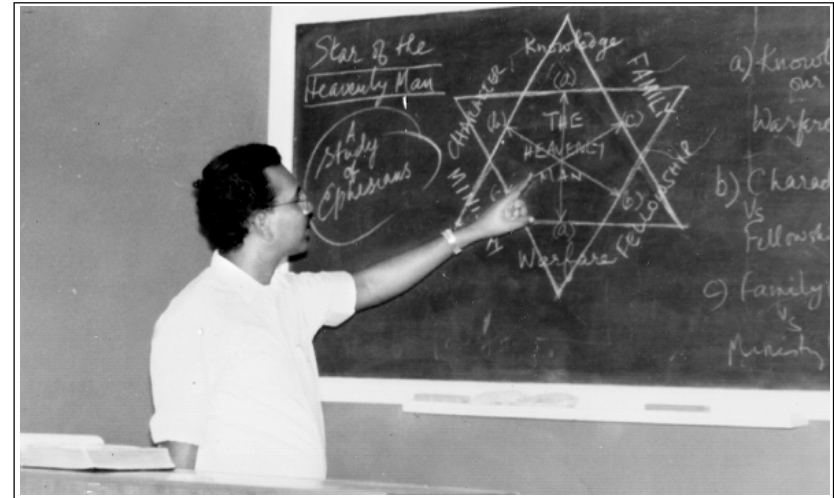
Conclusion

The overcoming Church becomes the Bride of Christ
and it will receive the Heavenly applause!

The Epistle to the Ephesians

Theme:
“Heavenly Man”

**Truths taught
in the National Staff Retreat
of the Blessing Youth Mission
in Vellore, India, January 1987**



*A Teaching Session
by the author*

The Epistle to the Ephesians

Of the 13 Epistles of Apostle Paul, 9 are called the Church Epistles. They were addressed to 7 Churches as Christ addressed 7 Churches in the Book of Revelation! The chronological order of these 9 Epistles is 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, Colossians, Ephesians and Philippians, written between AD 52 and 64. The canonical order is of course different.

All the Pauline Epistles are known for their Christocentricity. In Romans, Christ is presented as the *Power* of God to us; 1 Corinthians, *Wisdom* of God; 2 Corinthians, *Comfort* of God; Galatians, *Righteousness* of God; Ephesians, *Riches* of God; Philippians, *Sufficiency* of God; Colossians, *Fullness* of God; 1 Thessalonians, *Promise* of God; 2 Thessalonians, *Reward* of God.

Ephesus was one of the largest and most impressive cities in the ancient world, a political-religious-commercial centre in Asia Minor. Ephesus and its inhabitants are mentioned more than 20 times in the New Testament. At the time of Paul, this was probably the 4th largest city in the world. Paul's first visit to this city was pretty short due to an uproar (Acts 18:19-21). His second visit lasted for three years (20:31). Luke mentions it as two years, perhaps as a part of the stay (19:10). Ephesians is one of Paul's prison epistles, the other three being Colossians, Philippians and Philemon (Eph 3:1; 4:1; 6:20). Christians in Ephesus were dwelling under the shadow of the great Temple of Diana, seeing daily its outward grandeur, and hearing of its pompous ritualism. Appropriately Paul

spoke of a more glorious structure called the Church (Eph 2:19-22). The Christian congregation here was partly Jews and partly Gentiles. The Gospel spread out to "all Asia" from Ephesus (Acts 19:10).

Ephesians was not addressed to a single Church but to several Churches around Ephesus as a circular letter. We learn this from these references: "All the saints" (1:15), "You Gentiles" (3:1), "Peace to the brothers" (6:23). The word "Church" referred to in this Epistle throughout is in singular. The underlying idea is a sample of the Universal Church. Ephesians may be called as Paul's treatise on the Universal Church, the Body of Christ. As such, it is not encumbered with local problems. It soars high above mundane affairs and takes us into heaven, where we are presented with the heavenly view of the Church as it fits into God's eternal plan. My outline of this Epistle on pages 8 to 12 is titled as the "Heavenly Man." Ephesians is called the Alps of the New Testament.

Paul brings out the work of the Trinitarian Godhead in the formation and functioning of the Church so beautifully in this Epistle. The foundation of the Church is the "Will of the Father" (1:11). The course of the Church is by the "Satisfaction of the Son" (2:5). The end of the Church is "Life in the Spirit" (3:16). The 7 oneness factors for the unity of the Church points towards this (4:4-6). Various pictures are given for the Church: Building (2:21), Body (4:12,16), Bride (5:27) and Battalion (6:13). The general theme of the Epistle is "fullness." Fullness of God (3:19), Fullness of Christ (4:13) and Fullness of the Spirit (5:18).

There are a number of Old Testament references in Ephesians. 4:8/Psa 68:18; Judg 5:12; 4:25/Zech 8:16; 4:26/Psa 4:4; 5:31/Gen 2:24; 6:1-3/Ex 20:12; 6:17/ Isa 59:17. The Epistle is generally divided as the Doctrinal Section, Chapters 1 to 3; and Practical Section, Chapters 4 to 6. The first section speaks of our “*wealth*” in Christ, and the next one our “*walk*” in Christ (1:3; 4:1). The first section tells of our “blessings” in Christ, and the next one teaches us lessons on our “behaviour.” The first one is our privilege, and the next section is our responsibility.

No other Epistle sets forth more clearly the believer’s position “in Christ.” Most of what I shared with my fellow-students during my college days in Karaikudi Engineering College Campus (1963-1968) in the evening gatherings was on this theme: “IN CHRIST.” The pages of Ephesians in my Gideons Pocket New Testament were almost torn! How we used to jump from our knees with jubilant shouts of Hallelujah! Take for example the passage 2:13-18. In Christ, distance done away, “*made nigh*,” disunion done away, “*middle wall broken*,” dissension done away, “*enmity abolished*,” and distinction done away, “*of twain one new man!*”

Apostle Paul reflects the message of the Epistle in his farewell address to the Ephesian Elders in Acts 20. “Grace” (Eph 1:6; 2:7)/(Acts 20:24,32); “Bonds” (3:1; 4:1)/(20:22,23); “Counsel of God” (1:11)/(20:27); “Redemption of purchased possession” (1:14)/(20:28); “Building up ... Inheritance” (1:14,18; 2:20; 5:5)/(20:32). I observed 21 couplets in this Farewell Address (Acts 20:17-35) —

- (1) Life *and* Service (vv18b,19a)
- (2) Tears *and* Trials (v19)
- (3) Withheld not *but* proclaimed (v20)
- (4) Public *and* Private teaching (v20b)
- (5) Testifying to Jews *and* Gentiles (v21a)
- (6) Repentance *and* Faith (v21b)
- (7) Not knowing *but* Spirit’s revelation (vv22,23)
- (8) Chains *and* Tribulations (v23)
- (9) Nothing moves me, *nor* do I count my life dear (v24)
- (10) To finish my race *and* the ministry (v24)
- (11) Gospel of God’s grace *and* of God’s Kingdom (vv24b,25)
- (12) Yourselves *and* the flock (v28)
- (13) Church: Purchased by Christ’s blood
and Administered by the Spirit (v28)
- (14) Wolves from outside
and perverse teachers inside (vv29,30)
- (15) Watch *and* remember (v31)
- (16) Night *and* day (v31)
- (17) Commending to God *and* His Word (v32)
- (18) The Word builds up *and* gives inheritance (v32)
- (19) Coveted no one’s gold, *but* laboured (vv33,34)
- (20) My needs *and* those of my associates (v34)
- (21) My example *and* Christ’s words (v35)

Ephesians and Colossians are two Epistles written about the same date under the same circumstances. The Apostle is writing the same great truths in both. Here are some examples of mutual resemblance: Eph 1:7/Col 1:14; Eph 1:10/Col 1:20; Eph 2:5/Col 2:12,13; Eph 3:2/Col 1:25; Eph 4:16/Col 2:19; Eph 5:6-8/Col 3:6-8; Eph 6:19,20/Col 4:3,4. Both the Epistles were carried by

Tychicus (Eph 6:21; Col 4:7-9). Studying Ephesians and Colossians together would be tremendously profitable.

This Epistle contains two classic prayers of Paul for the enlightenment and edification of believers (1:15-23; 3:14-21). These passages are worth memorizing, especially by Pastors. They can even repeat it everyday for their congregations. Regular teaching must be given to believers on the 7 oneness factors (One Body, One Spirit, One Hope, One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One God and Father) (4:4-6), and the 7 weapons of Spiritual warfare (Belt, Breastplate, Boots, Shield, Helmet, Sword, Prayer) (6:14-18). Ephesians is usually called a “doxological” Epistle meaning it should cause the readers to “glorify” God both in worship and in walk (1:3,6,12,14; 3:21; 5:2,4c; 5:19,20). Towards this end I submit my outline of pages 394 to 398.

The Epistle to the Ephesians

Theme: ***Heavenly Man***

Texts

- 1:3,10,20,21 ... blessed in *heavenly* places
- 2:6 ...seated with Christ in *heavenly* places
- 3:10,15 ... powers in the *heavenly* places
- 4:10 ... Christ ascended far above all *heavens*
- 5:5 ... Inheritance in the *Kingdom* of Christ
- 6:12 ... Wicked powers in the *heavenly* places

Analysis

1. The Knowledge of the Heavenly Man
2. The Character of the Heavenly Man
3. The Fellowship of the Heavenly Man
4. The Ministry of the Heavenly Man
5. The Family of the Heavenly Man
6. The Warfare of the Heavenly Man

1) The Knowledge of the Heavenly Man

- 1:2 ... *Grace and Peace from the Father & Christ*
- :3-21 ... *Every spiritual blessing* (v3)
 - Chosen and predestined* (vv4,5)
 - Accepted in the Beloved* (v6)
 - Redemption & forgiveness through blood* (v7)
 - Wisdom and prudence* (vv8,17-21)
 - Union of all in Heaven and Earth in Christ* (v10)
 - Sealed by the Spirit, the guarantee* (v14)
- 2:4-9 ... *Mercy, love, grace, kindness saved by faith (not of works, no boasting)*

:11-13 ... *Strangers ... without hope ...
brought near by the blood*
:14-18 ... *Christ is our Peace ... reconciliation,
access, removal of law, etc.*
3:11,12 ... *God's eternal purpose fulfilled in Christ —
Through Him we have boldness and
access with confidence through faith.*

2) The Character of the Heavenly Man

2:1-3 ... *Dead in sin ... made alive lust of flesh
... children of wrath*
:10 ... *To walk in good works ... saved for works*
4:17-24 ... *Put off the former conduct of lust ...
Put on the new man of holiness*
:25-32 ... *Interpersonal relationships ...
“God/Christ” is the pattern.*
:3-5 ... *To walk as saints*

3) The Fellowship of the Heavenly Man

1:1 ... *To the saints @ Ephesus ... faithful in Christ*
:15 ... *Faith in Jesus and love for saints*
:22 ... *Christ the Head of the Church*
:23 ... *His fullness fills the Body*
2:19 ... *fellow-citizenship with saints in God's
household*
:20-22 ... *Foundation, cornerstone, building ...
(Dwelling place for the Trinitarian God ...
The Church is the Temple.)*

3:10 ... *The Church makes the wisdom God known
to principalities and powers in heavenly
places — Responsibility*

:14-21 ... *Strengthening and deepening of the inner
life in the fellowship of the saints
(Compare 1:23 with 3:19)
The Church is central in all the programme
of God — “all ages” (v21)*

4:1-6 ... *Unity of the Spirit... One Lord, One faith, ...*
:13-16 ... *Growth of the “entire” (v13) Church to “a”
perfect man*

- a) Established in doctrine (v14)
- b) Edifying in love (vv15,16b)

5:6-13 ... *Not to fellowship with darkness*
:14-16 ... *The world is dead (v14), foolish (v15),
and evil (v16)*
:17-21 ... *Walking in the Spirit in the company of saints*
6:21-24 ... *Encouragement and comfort to one another*

4) The Ministry of the Heavenly Man

1:1 ... *Paul an apostle by the will of God*
:12,14 ... *To the praise of His glory*
:16 ... *prayers for the saints*
3:1 ... *prisoner for Christ*
:2,5 ... *Revelation of the Gospel first to the preacher*
:6 ... *Bringing the gentiles into the Church*

:7,8a ... A ministry according to the *grace*
and *power* of God

:8b ... Preach the *unsearchable riches of Christ*

:9 ... Preach to *all people*

:13 ... *Not to lose heart at tribulations ... glory*

4:7-12 ... *Gifts for equipment and edification*

6:19,20 ... Prayer for the *utterance*
and *boldness* of the Ambassador

5) The Family of the Heavenly Man

5:22-24... Exhortation to *wives*
(It begins with the wives because they only
build the house, Prov 14:1)

:25-33... Exhortation to *husbands*

6:1-4 ... *Parents and children*

:5-9 ... *Servants and masters* (Those days of
slavery, v8) — Now this passage is
applicable for our secular and ministerial
relationships.

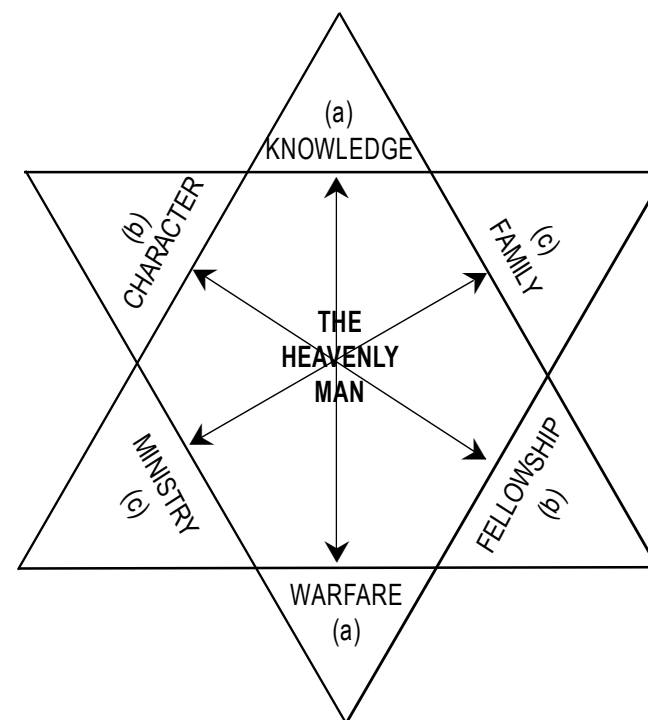
6) The Warfare of the Heavenly Man

2:2 ... *Prince of the power of the air* ...
causing folks to sin

4:27 ... *Give no place to the devil.*

6:10-18... "*whole*" *armour of God* (vv11,13)
Should not be weak
or slack in any one area.

The Star of the Heavenly Man (Counterparts)



Legend —

(a) Knowledge of God and our Position in Christ
vs.

Warfare against Satan and his powers

(b) Character (Leaving the old life of Gentile company)
vs.

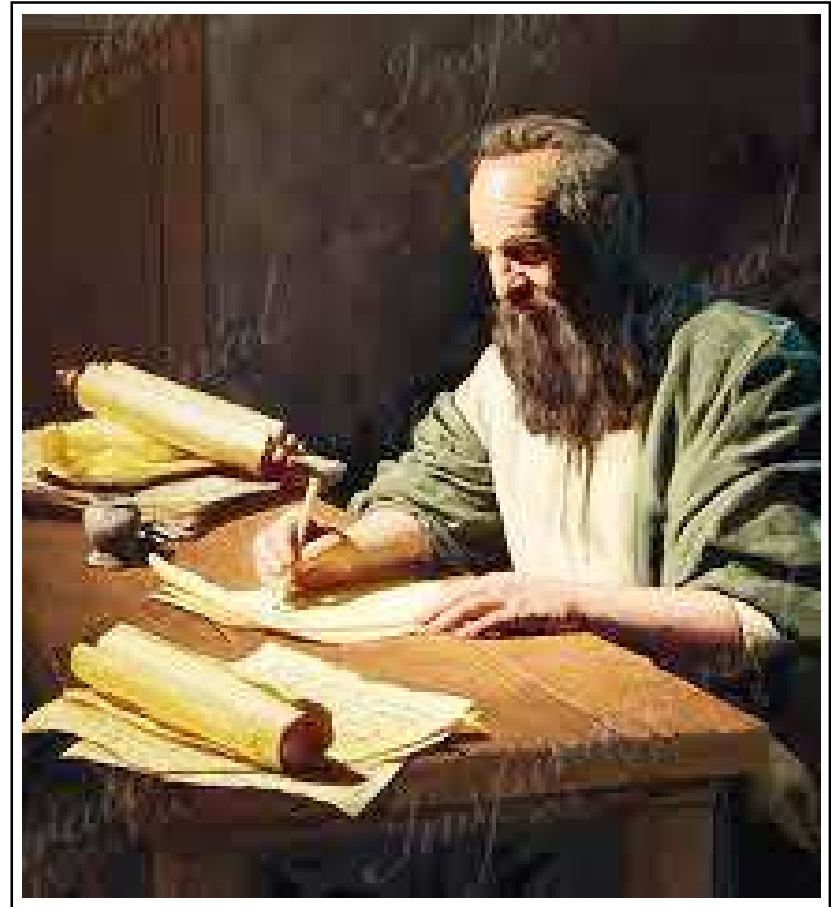
Fellowship with saints in holiness and love

(c) Family (own House)
vs.

Ministry (God's House and work)

The First Epistle to the Thessalonians

**Outline Studies
given in the Blessing Centre,
Vellore, India
Nov 1979 to Feb 1980**



The First Epistle to the Thessalonians

This is the first of Paul's 13 Epistles, written in 52 or 53 AD, that is, about 18 years after his conversion. He wrote nothing during the first 15 years of his ministry (AD 37-52). The *chronological* order of his Epistles would be to us a helpful information to serve as a background while interpreting them. After 1 & 2 Thessalonians, he wrote 1 & 2 Corinthians and Galatians in AD 57, Romans in AD 58, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon and Philippians in AD 62-63, 1 Timothy in AD 65-67, Titus in AD 66-67, and 2 Timothy in AD 67-68. Why then is the *canonical* order in our Bibles different? The Church fathers arranged them theologically. They gave preference to *doctrinal* significance over *historical* sequence. "Justification" comes first as from Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians and Galatians. Next comes "Sanctification" as from Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians. Finally, "glorification" as from 1 & 2 Thessalonians. Letters to the individuals, namely Philemon, Timothy and Titus, are placed last.

The Thessalonian Church was born during Paul's short visit in his Second Missionary journey. Thessalonica was a commercial port city in modern Greece. The congregation the apostles founded here had a "great multitude of devout Greeks" and "not a few of the prominent women" (Acts 17:1-4). The absence of any direct quotation from the Old Testament in 1 & 2 Thessalonians tells us that the Church in this city was predominantly non-Jewish. Paul refers to idolatry as their

former way of life (1 Thess 1:9). He had to leave Thessalonica abruptly due to oppositions (Acts 17:1-9). The new converts, especially from paganism, did not have much support. They had become believers "under fire" (1 Thess 1:6). That's why he wrote this letter.

The truth of the Gospel takes root in resistant soil overcoming the tempter (1 Thess 3:5). Suffering promotes Christian maturity (2:14-16; 3:3,7). Silvanus (Latin version of "Silas") a Roman citizen and Timothy a half-Jew were coworkers with Paul during this journey (Acts 18:1-18). Therefore these three became the coauthors and co-senders of these two Epistles (1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1). Paul was updated by Timothy about the condition of the new believers (1 Thess 3:6). These letters are examples of excellent communication from a team of missionary leaders. Here's a lesson to Mission executives and founders of field Churches. They must be in regular touch with the first generation Christians through correspondence and follow-up by visits of persons like Timothy. Sending him to Thessalonica meant killing loneliness to Paul which he patiently put up with (3:1).

In 1 Thessalonians which is the very first Epistle that Paul wrote, he speaks so much about the Second Coming of Christ. Sermons on Second Coming must take centrestage in our pulpits. Otherwise, Christians would become more and more earthly-minded and less and less eternity-conscious. The entire month of December in our Churches is allotted for songs and sermons on First Coming. How much for the Second Coming, even

throughout the year? The number of prophecies in the Bible about Christ's First Coming is a little over 100, whereas there are about 300 prophecies about His Second Coming. Our imbalance makes us least prepared for the next most important event in God's Calendar. This disproportion is making our pulpits less and less relevant.

The Second Coming of Christ is the noblest incentive for any believer going through persecution and suffering. No wonder Paul makes the Return of Christ as the most prominent theme of 1 Thessalonians (1:10; 2:19,20; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:1-11,23,24). Of course there are references to this theme in the Second Epistle also (2 Thess 1:5-10; 2:3,8-15). The difference is that the First Epistle deals with the Rapture in which Christ comes *for* the saints, whereas the Second Epistle deals with the Revelation in which He comes *with* the saints. References to Second Coming in the First Epistle relate primarily to believers, whereas those in the Second relate pointedly to unbelievers and anti-Christ. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 are the only passages in the Bible that explicitly mention that believers who are alive at Christ's Return will be changed and will meet Christ in the air without dying.

The Thessalonian Christians misunderstood Paul's emphasis on Second Coming. It was meant to motivate them to keep going on with renewed vigour. But they became idle "gazing up into the sky!" (Compare Acts 1:11). Some of them even stopped going to offices and

workshops (2 Thess 3:11). Paul reminded them of the apostolic tradition: "If anyone will not work, he should not eat also!" (v10b). Both breadwinners and butterwinners must be productive.

Just like we have false apostles, false prophets, false shepherds and false teachers, it seems there were some "false letters" also in circulation (2 Thess 2:2). That's why Paul identifies himself or gives his signature in eleven of his Epistles (1 Cor 4:21; 2 Cor 10:1; Gal 5:2; 6:11; Eph 3:1; Col 1:23; 4:18; 1 Thess 2:18; 2 Thess 2:2; 3:17; Phile 19). Even today, with advance printing technology and digital facilities, so much of rubbish is published and telecast as revelations from Heaven relating to Second Coming (2 Thess 2:2). Beware! Stay within what's written in the Bible. Don't even "think" beyond it (1 Cor 4:6). Be cautious with commuters to Heaven! Test anyone's dream or vision with the help of the hammer and fire of God's Word (Jer 23:28,29). Do not waste time fighting over the chronology and character of events associated with the Second Advent. Leave that matter with God. Concentrate on preparation to meet the Lord who is coming "certainly" and "quickly" (Rev 22:20). Thessalonians received the Word with joy but didn't do enough of homework. On the other hand, those in Berea verified Paul's teaching with the Scriptures and so became more "noble-minded" than the Thessalonians (Acts 17:11). Whoever is the preacher, check what he says with what the Bible says.

In no other generation the society would have been so impersonal. The Church and Missions are no exception.

The digital world, in spite of all its advantages, is ringing a deathbell to loving and expressive relationships. Everything has become mechanical. I appeal to Pastors and Christian leaders to emulate Apostle Paul. While writing to Thessalonian believers, he compares himself to a “mother,” a “father” and a “brother” (1 Thess 2:7,8; 9-16; 17-20). The word “brothers” is used 21 times in these two Epistles! He calls the “holy brothers” to greet one another with a “holy kiss” (5:26,27). His testimony shames us who are in ministerial responsibilities: “We imparted to you not only the Gospel but also our own lives” (2:8). Our supporters and congregational members are not cows to be milked but sheep to be fed! “Toil and hardship ... night and day” (v9). Oh for more fatherliness, motherliness, brotherliness and friendliness in our rank and file! It’s safe to be fans and followers of such servants of God (1:6). Keep yourself away from arrogant and autocratic leaders. Paul repeatedly called the Thessalonians to stand on the teachings of the humble founders (2:11,12; 3:4; 4:2; 2 Thess 2:5,15; 3:4,6,10,14).

Christianity is ever a missionary faith, and its field is the entire world. The Thessalonian believers “sounded forth” the Word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, which were the two Greek provinces of the Roman empire, but also in “every place” (1 Thess 1:7-9). May our Churches in India experience such a Revival that would result in the Evangelisation of the entire Nation!

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“*Work of faith*” — Waiting for His Son
 “*Labour of love*” — Serving the living and true God
 “*Patience of hope*” — “Turning to God from idols”
 (vv9,10)

vv4,5

How did Paul ascertain the ELECTION of God?

- (a) Powerful entrance of the Word ... “FOR”
- (b) Joyful reception of the Word (v5)

v6

Followers of 1) Apostles | Corinthians did not!
 and 2) Christ | (1 Cor 11:1)

Following Jesus in affliction (cf. 2:14; 3:4)
 Essential (Gal 6:14)

“JOY” and “HOLY GHOST” —

Psa 36:8 ... *River of God’s pleasure,*
 46:4 ... *River ... streams ... glad*
 Lk 1:41 ... *babe leaped ... Holy Spirit*
 Acts 13:52 ... *filled with joy & Holy Spirit*
 Gal 5:22 ... *fruit of the Spirit ... joy*

v7

Romans divided the ancient Greece into —

- a) Macedonia (Northern part)
- b) Achaia (Southern part)

v9

“*turning from idols*”

|
 applicable to Gentiles and Jews
 Acts 17:4

Jews — Idols of traditions
 Gentiles — Strange gods

v10

- (a) Resurrection
- (b) Second Coming
- (c) Judgment

vv4-10

Secrets of a successful ministry —

1. Election (v4)
2. Anointing and Assurance (v5)
3. Ministers’ exemplary life (v6a)
4. Outward persecution but inward joy (v6b)
5. Active witnessing (v8)
6. Separation from the world (v9)
unto the Lord
7. Love for the Second Coming! (v10)

1 Thessalonians

Chapter 2

Ch 1 — Model Church (1:7)

Ch 2 — Model Servant (2:10,11)

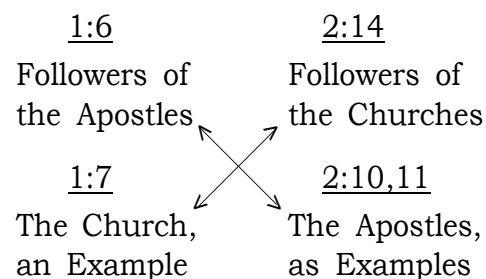
Ch 1 — Power of the ministry (1:5)

Ch 2 — Purity of the ministry (2:4b,10)

Ch 1 — The message of the Preacher (1:5)

Ch 2 — The manner of the Preacher

(2:1,3,9, *our, our, our*; 2:7,11, *as, as*)



Compound Truths of +ve and -ve in this Chapter —

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|---------|
| (1) Exhortation | — <u>Not</u> of deceit, ...
<u>but</u> faithful & trustworthy | vv3,4 |
| (2) Accountability | — <u>Not</u> to please men
<u>but</u> God | vv4,5 |
| (3) Finance & Fame | — <u>Not</u> covetous, flattering, ...
<u>but</u> gentle, genuine care ... | vv5-7 |
| (4) Ministry | — <u>Not</u> preaching only ...
<u>but</u> the very preacher | vv8-11 |
| (5) Response | — <u>Not</u> the word of men
<u>but</u> the Word of God | vv13,14 |

Some interesting triplets —

1) Marks of true Exhortation (v3)

No deceit, uncleanness, guile

2) Marks of a true Minister (v10)

Holily, Justly, Blamelessly

Before	Before	Before
<u>GOD</u>	<u>MAN</u>	<u>GOD & MAN</u>

3) Effects of genuine preaching (v11)

<i>Exhort</i>	<i>Comfort</i>	<i>Charge</i> ← “as a father”
Compare with NT Prophecy		
(1 Cor 14:3)		

4) Elements of true expectation (v19)

Hope | Joy | Crown
(Progressive)

Marks of a good minister —

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Boldness | (v2) |
| 2. Pleasing God | (vv3,4; Gal 1:10) |
| 3. Financial honesty | (vv5,6; Acts 20:33) |
| 4. Gentleness | (vv7,11; 2 Tim 2:24) |
| 5. Love & Affection | (vv8,19; Jn 21:15-17) |
| 6. Hard labour | (v9) |
| | ↑ Night & Day — Night first! |
| | Jewish concept! |
| | Compare Gen 1:5,8,13, etc. |
| 7. Holy behaviour | (v10) |

v5 God is WITNESS

Paul's standard of life —

1. God is witness (v5)
2. Christ is witness
3. Holy Spirit is witness | (Rom 9:1)
4. Believers are witnesses (v10; Acts 24:16)

v12

1. Walk worthy of God (also Col 1:10)
2. Walk worthy of the calling (Eph 4:1)
3. Walk worthy of the Gospel (Phil 1:27)

vv15,16

Sins of the (Jews) i.e. Nominal Christians

1. Rejection of (Jesus & His Prophets) salvation
2. Persecution of (true, spiritual) Christians
3. Self- and world-pleasing — (God set aside)
4. High-mindedness & arrogance (Despising others)
5. Self-centered religion (No missionary spirit)

v18

Satan hindered us

Spirit hindered us (Acts 16:6,7)

Both relating to visiting of places.

Need for right discernment even under similar instances.

v19

Crown — two Greek words —

- a) “*diadema*” — Royal Crown
- b) “*stephanos*” — Victor's Crown

↑
Here!

↑
Paul's victory is in terms of souls!

1 Thessalonians

Chapter 3

- Ch 1 — A Pattern Congregation
- Ch 2 — A Pattern Minister
- Ch 3 — Perfecting the pattern congregation (v10)

Mt 13:12

Rev 22:11

e.g.) We pray for more holiness because we have the holy seed already in our hearts. Similarly we pray for more love, because we have the spirit of love already in us.
Etc.

- Paul's compelling concern for follow-up (v1,5)
↑
“no longer forbear”
 - a) By correspondence (Gal 4:11)
 - b) By an agent (1 Thess 3:1,5)
 - c) By personal visit (1 Thess 3:10; Acts 15:36)
- Duplets in this chapter —
 - v2 *establish & comfort*
 - v6 *faith & charity*
 - v6 *our desire & your desire*
 - v7 *affliction & distress*
 - v10 *see you & fill you*
 - v12 *increase & abound (in love)*
 - v12 *one toward another & all men*
(insiders) (outsiders)

Lessons concerning FAITH in this Chapter:

(1) Faith must be established (v2)

- against wavering (Js 1:6)
- against tossing (Eph 4:13,14)
- against fainting (Eph 3:12,13)

This is by MINISTRIES in the Church.

(2) Faith must stand the tempter's attack (v5)

- attack on Peter's faith (Lk 22:31-33)
 - First attack of the Tempter is concerning
God's Word (Gen 3:1)
- Because, faith is through the WORD (Rom 10:17)

Withstanding this is by the WORD.

(3) Faith must express through love (v6)

- (a) Paul → Congregation (vv1,5)
- (b) Thessalonians → Paul (v6)
- (c) One → another (fellowship) (v12)
- (d) Thessalonians → Outsiders (v12)

For (b) (c) & (d), the pattern is (a)

↑
"as we ..." (v6)
"as we do ..." (v12)

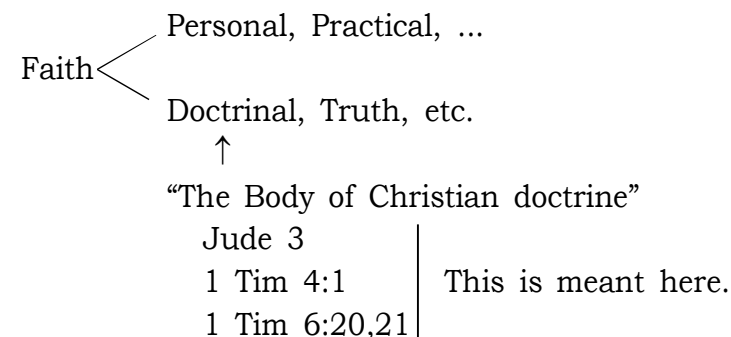
In other words, it begins with the head (the leader)

Compare Psa 133:1-3 ... *Head*

↓
Beard
↓
Skirts

(4) Faith must comfort those in affliction & distress (v7)
eg) 1 Thess 4:14,15,18

(5) Faith must be perfected by a fuller knowledge (v10)



A person exercising great miracle-faith may be a baby in the doctrine of faith. He needs to be perfected and educated or matured by teaching, etc.

Heart faith + Head faith (2 Tim 1:7) ... "*mind*"

Both are important.

Faith is believing the right thing.

eg) Mk 16:17,18
5 items — "*shall*"
1 item — "*if*"

1 Thessalonians

Chapter 4

- Ch 1-3 — Historical aspects
4-5 — Practical exhortations
(4:1) “*exhort*”

Ch 4

- No new commandments,
but a call to an abounding life.
v1 ... “*abound more and more*”
v10 ... “*increase more and more*”

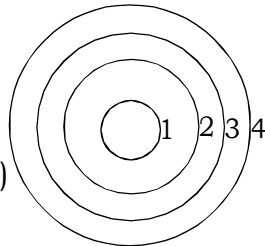
The Apostle’s authority for this call —
“*The Lord Jesus*” (vv1,2)

The Apostle’s tool —
“*The Word of the Lord*” (v15)

contains

“*WILL of God*” (v3) “*CALL of God*” (v7)

- Exhortations— 4 concentric circles
 - (1) Members of one’s own body (vv3-8)
 - (2) Members of Christ’s body (vv9,10)
 - (3) Members outside His Body (The world) (vv11,12)
 - (4) Members out of this world (vv13-17)



(1) One’s own Body (vv3-8)

“*Holiness*” (v7) —

Fruit
Goal (Rom 6:22)

“*Sanctification*” (v3) — The Process

Sanctification of the body emphasized throughout
Paul’s and Peter’s Epistles —

Rom 13:14	Col 3:5
1 Cor 6:13	2 Tim 2:22
2 Cor 12:21	1 Pet 2:11
Gal 5:13	2 Pet 2:9,10
Eph 4:22,23	

(2) Members of Christ’s Body (vv9,10)

There are degrees in love.
“*Love one another*” is basic
and we should build further on that love.

eg) Phil 1:9,10

Right judgment
Approval of excellent things
(Appreciation, etc.)

(3) Outsiders (vv11,12)

The Apostle’s emphasis on Second Coming was
mistaken by the Thessalonians. Some of them stopped
working!

Too heavenly-minded to be of any earthly use!
Honesty in secular jobs is a powerful testimony —

eg) Dan 6:4,20
Prov 22:29 (*Diligent in business*)

(4) Those up in Heaven (vv13-17)

No sorrow because they only *sleep*!

↑

Jn 11:11

Acts 7:60

1 Cor 11:30

15:18,51

They employed the word “*sleep*” to hold forth the truth of Resurrection.

Nothing else would comfort the bereaved enough like the fact of resurrection and reunion (1 Thess 4:13-18)

1 Thessalonians

Chapter 5

- Like the Second Coming of Christ, the need for sanctification of the Church is also emphasized throughout this Epistle —
 - 2:10 ... *devoutly, justly, blamelessly*
 - 3:13 ... *blameless in holiness*
 - 4:3,7 ... *immorality ... uncleanness*
 - 5:23,27 ... *sanctify completely ...*
- vv1-5 — The PURPOSE of sanctification (The suddenness of His Coming)
- 6-22 — The POSTULATES of sanctification (Demanding conditions) (“*Therefore ...*”)
- 23-28 — The PROMISE of sanctification

(A) The PURPOSE

Second Coming is the greatest incentive for a holy walk with the Lord.

Sanctification and Second Coming —

Not only in Paul’s writings;
but also in Peter’s (2 Pet 3:10,11)
and John’s (1 Jn 3:2,3)

(B) The POSTULATES

- 1) *Watch and be sober* (vv6-10)
- 2) Comfort, edify, love, warn, support and understand one another (vv11,13b,14,15)

3) Your rulers

“*Know*” them (Recognize) v12

“*Esteem*” (v13), *salute and honour* (Heb 13:24)

“*Follow*” them (Heb 13:7)

“*Obe*y” them (:17)

“*Support*” them (1 Tim 5:17,18)

4) Rejoice (v16)

Rom 8:15,16 ... A great reason to rejoice

Phil 3:1,3 ... Way to rejoice

(No confidence in flesh)

5) Pray (v17)

Lk 18:1 ... Fainting in prayer possible

Mt 26:41 ... Spirit vs. Flesh

Dan 6:7,10... Main attack on prayer

6) Give thanks (v18)

Phil 4:6 ... Saturate prayer with it

Lk 24:52,53... Preparation for Pentecost

7) Quench not the Spirit (v19)

Psa 78:40,41 ... By limiting

Isa 63:9,10 ... Failure to appreciate God’s love

Acts 7:51-53 ... No immediate obedience

Heb 10:28,29... Despising the cleansing blood

8) Despise not prophesyings (v20)

More sure Word of Prophecy (2 Pet 1:19-21)

9) Prove all things (v21)

Especially in the realm of spiritual gifts (1 Jn 4:1)

10) Abstain (v22)

Avoid all questionable things

1 Jn 2:27

3:19-22

(C) The PROMISE

“*Whole*” sanctification.

Involving “*whole*” spirit, soul and body

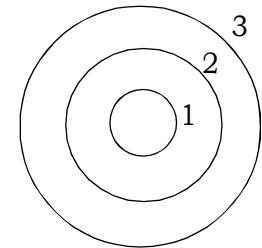
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He called —

He completes! (Phil 2:13)

Finally the authors of the Epistle request the Thessalonian believers to pray for them (5:25).

What a humility!

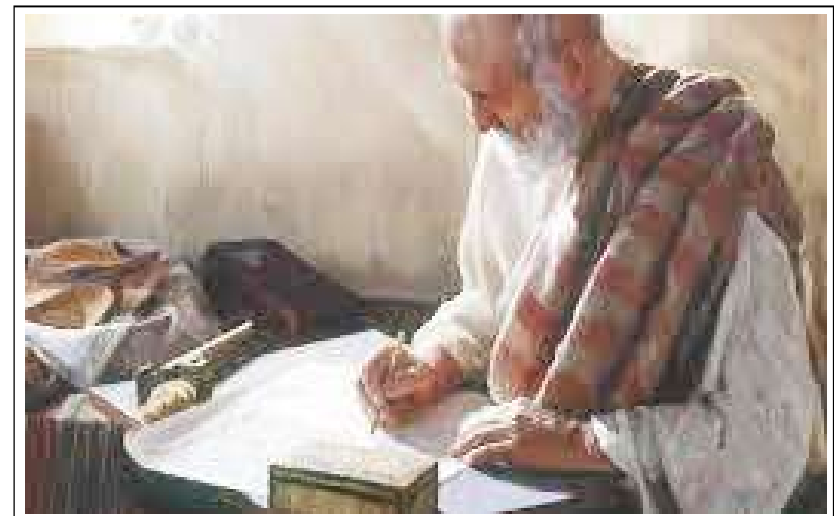


The first and the Second Epistles to Timothy

Theme:

“Do the work of an Evangelist!”

**Study Outlines on the subject of
EVANGELISM,
May 1988**



First & Second Timothy

Four of Apostle Paul's thirteen Epistles were written to individuals: Timothy, Titus and Philemon. His last letter was to Timothy. Timothy is first introduced as a "disciple" (Acts 16:1). He lived in Lystra. He was probably Paul's convert during his first Missionary journey (14:6,7). Paul affectionately calls him, "my true son in the faith" (1 Tim 1:2). Timothy was the son of a Greek Gentile father and a devout Jewish mother (Acts 16:1). She and her mother had incalculably influenced him from his childhood with the Scriptures (2 Tim 1:5; 3:15). Mixed marriages which were unlawful in the early periods became frequent later in Jewish history.

The name "Timothy" means "Honoured by God" or "One who honours God." Timothy was known for his timidity (1 Cor 16:10). Paul had to stir him up by reminding him that, "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power" (2 Tim 1:6,7). Both Paul and the Presbyters had laid hands on him to commission him for the work of God (2 Tim 1:6; 1 Tim 4:14). He was known for his self-denying character. He left home at once to accompany Paul (Acts 16:1-3). He submitted himself to circumcision for the Gospel's sake. He was abstemious notwithstanding his bodily infirmities (1 Tim 5:23). Paul recommended a more generous diet. He singled him out referring to unbeatable selflessness, sincerity and service (Phil 2:20-22). How badly senior servants of God need individuals who would serve them as sons and daughters!

Titus was another young man whom Apostle Paul called as his "son in the faith" (1 Tim 1:2,18; 2 Tim 2:1; Tit 1:4). Timothy was a half-Jew and Titus a non-Jew (Gal 2:3). See how prudently the Apostle picked them up for his cross-cultural missionary work! Regionalism and nepotism are among our fatal weaknesses in Christian ministries. Knowing the stories of young men like Joshua and David, apostle Paul trusted these youngsters with huge responsibilities. In general, hypocrites and compromisers are less among young people compared to those among elders. Paul alerted Timothy against despal by elderly believers, and he urged him to keep progressing in all areas of his life (1 Tim 4:12-15). In his greetings, Paul usually wrote "grace and peace." Only when he wrote to Timothy and Titus, he added the word "mercy!" (1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2; Tit 1:4). Yes, youngsters who serve God need the mercy of God more than others! You will find my Talks delivered in the Youth Workers Seminar of the Blessing Youth Mission in 2008, English-Tamil, helpful. (Title: *How to Bless the Youth*; YouTube: StanleyOnBible).

Paul's primary purpose of writing to Timothy was to encourage him in his difficult task of dealing with doctrinal errors and practical problems in the Church at Ephesus, and to give him instructions concerning pastoral responsibilities and the qualifications and duties of Church leadership (Acts 20:17-38). The Church here had doctrinal problems, relational problems and ministerial problems. Ephesus was renowned for its Temple of Diana (19:27,28). It was a commercial centre with a thriving trade of idol-

making (vv24-27). The lessons of 1 & 2 Timothy are fundamentally vital to us in India in the propagation of the Gospel. We must be firmly grounded on the authenticity of our message. The clause, “*This is a faithful saying*,” is found nowhere else in the Bible but used five times in these Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Tit 3:8). Paul stresses belief and behaviour equally. The word “*faith*” which is the sum of Christian truth occurs numerous times in these Epistles (1 Tim 1:19; 3:9,13; 4:1,6,12; 5:8; 6:10,12,21; 2 Tim 3:8,15; 4:7). And “*godliness*” which must be the outcome of sound doctrine (1 Tim 2:2,10; 3:16; 4:7,8; 6:3,5,6,11; 2 Tim 3:5).

Apostle Paul used various analogies or metaphors of Christian life and ministry in order to enthuse and encourage Timothy: Soldiers for single-mindedness (2 Tim 2:3,4), Athletes for strict rules (v5), Farmers for strenuous labour (v6), Workmen for sound doctrine (v15) and Vessels for sanctified life (vv20,21). He uses the words “*charge*” or “*command*” oftentimes to drive home the seriousness of whatever he wrote on Ecclesiology (= Church) as well as Eschatology (= Last things). See 1 Timothy 1:3,5,18; 4:11; 5:7,21; 6:13,17 and 2 Tim 4:1. The very first *charge* was against false doctrine (1 Tim 1:3). The word “*doctrine*” is frequently used (1 Tim 1:9,10; 4:6,13,16; 6:1,3; 2 Tim 3:10). In the First Epistle we read that “some” turned away, “some” made a shipwreck, “some” went after Satan, “some” were led astray, and “some” have strayed (1:6,19; 5:15; 6:10,21). When we come to the Second Epistle, deplorably the word “some” became “all” (1:15; 4:16). First it was a break-away and then a break-down!

The two Epistles to Timothy contain three outstanding passages which must be memorized by every Christian —

(1) 1 Tim 3:16, “Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory!”

(2) 2 Tim 3:16,17, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

(3) 2 Tim 2:11-13, “This is a faithful saying: If we died with Christ, we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.”

The first one is about the Son of God; the next one about the Word of God; and the third about the Throne of God.

In the First Epistle, the Apostle was quite emphatic in whatever he wrote. But he gets emotional as he comes to the Second Epistle. Look at these sentences: “Onesiphorus often refreshed me” (1:16-18). “Phygelus and Hermogenes and all in Asia left me” (v15); “Demas has forsaken me” (4:10); “Only Luke is with me” (v11); “Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm” (v14); “Greet Priscilla and Aquila” (v19); I have left Trophimus sick in Miletus” (v20).

More than once Paul writes to Timothy, “Come to me quickly” (4:9,21a). He desperately desired to see his son before he died! Someone said, “In Romans, Paul is a theologian. In 1 Corinthians, he is a counsellor. In 2 Corinthians, he is a preacher. In Galatians, he is a defender. In 1 Timothy and Titus, he is a statesman. In 2 Timothy, he is a man!” Second Timothy is called the “swan song” of Paul. It’s the final message of the Apostle. There is a deep solemnity in the Epistle bordering on a note of sadness. But there’s also tone of triumph (4:6-8). His heartcry is a personal call by name to each of us: **“O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust!”** (1 Tim 6:20). Even in his hour of death, Paul desires to learn from the sacred pages of the Holy Scriptures (2 Tim 4:13). Let this be our passion too!

From Hebrews 13:23 we learn that Timothy also was imprisoned. Tradition says he was finally martyred. Historians tell us that Paul was beheaded not by the executioner’s axe but by the soldiers sword outside Rome to avoid too much notice. Edmund Barker, a Puritan writer, wrote, “Every Christian has two great works to do in the world: To live well, and to die well!” In Paul we see one who did both of these things! Let’s imitate him, just as he also imitated Christ (1 Cor 11:1; 4:16; Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:6).

The Outlines in the following pages are on the theme, *“Do the work of an evangelist”* (2 Tim 4:5).

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Theme —

“DO THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST” (2 Tim 4:5)

1 Timothy

Chapter 1

- 1:2,** *my true son in the faith*
— The fruit of a soulwinner
Acts 16:1,2
1 Cor 4:17
Phil 2:19-22 ... (Thorough discipling)
- 1:11,** *Glorious gospel of the Blessed God*
— Preciousness of the message
— Not an invention of man
Paul’s excitement: “My” Gospel! (2 Tim 2:8)
We should never lose this excitement!
- 1:11b,** *Gospel is committed to my trust*
— My responsibility and obligation
(as if the entire responsibility is on me!)
— God counts me!
“Woe ... if I preach not ...” (1 Cor 9:16)
Not an extra-curricular activity
Not an option but an obligation
Just a “week” of Evangelism — wrong!
- 1:12,** Christ —
a) trusted me
b) equipped me
c) appointed/
commissioned me
- | | |
|--|------------------|
| | for the ministry |
|--|------------------|

- 1:15,** *A faithful saying* | “CHRIST CAME
An acceptable saying | TO SAVE SINNERS!”

Historical		message
Personal		
Practical		

- 1:15b,** A personal gospel — “*I am the chief sinner*”
An universal gospel — “*sinner ... world*”

A bald man selling hair oil!
My conversion at 16 and testifying immediately.

Believing “Jesus lives”
vs.
Believing “in Jesus”
- 1:16,** Saved to serve!
“*a pattern*” — Primary reason for our salvation
“*To go and bear fruit!*” (Jn 15:16)

A Christian who is not a soulwinner is a contradiction —

Soulwinners x Backsliders (Lk 11:23)
- 1:18,** A charge and a commission to Timothy
(cf. 4:14) “*warfare*” ← Evangelism
Direct confrontation with Satan

Gates of Hell Not easy, but not impossible!
Calls for active and
wholehearted involvement!

1 Timothy

Chapter 2

- 2:1,** *Prayer for all men ... war = emergency*
— The first obligation in Evangelism
“For their salvation” (vv3,4)
- Jesus: *“Pray therefore!”* before *“Go therefore!”*
FMPB: A group praying for many years
BYM: A group praying for many years
- 2:2,** Prayer for all authorities
For a quiet atmosphere for evangelisation
Prayer for all men — to be saved
Prayer for all leaders — To provide peaceful
atmosphere for evangelism
World & Country MAPS
William Carey in his shoe-shop
- Missionary prayer meetings.
Prayer bulletins from missions.
Information brings challenge.
- 2:5,6,** The Gospel in a nutshell ...
God — Jesus Christ — man
a) God + man at enmity
b) Christ came as a *“Man”*
c) He died for all
d) He is alive to mediate between God & man
e) He is the only way — *“One Mediator”*
“A ministry of reconciliation”

*“We are Ambassadors (Heralds) ... calling ...
Be reconciled to God!”* (2 Cor 5:18-20)

- 2:7,** I am an *apostle* and a *preacher* for this message.
One who is “sent” as an authorized representative.
One who “proclaims” with authority.
- 2:8,** *Men to pray “everywhere”*
— Preparing the ground for evangelism.
- 2:8,** *Pray without wrath* — Against opposers
Pray without doubting — About results
eg) rich men (Mk 10:23-27)
No person too hard to be saved ...
“Hand of the Lord not shortened” (Isa 59:1)
No place too hard to be broken ...
“Rivers in the desert” (Isa 43:19c)
Never give up!
- 2:9-15,** lifestyle of women
— To be supportive for evangelism (v10)
A call to simple living!
Women are used for advertisements.
Godly women are an astute advertisement
for the Gospel!

Though not a public teaching ministry,
women have the 50% of the world which is all
women! They can actively reach them (Tit 2:3-5).

1 Timothy

Chapter 3

As the Church goes, so goes the world!

3:1-7, Qualifications of a Bishop —

(= pastor, shepherd, presbyter, elder)

- a) Personal life vv2,3
- b) Family life v4
- c) Church life v5
- d) Public life v7 ... “outside testimony”

The best method of evangelism is evangelism through local Church.

The mission of the Church is Missions;
the mission of Missions is Church-planting.

Three enemies for a Christian minister —

- | | | |
|------------------|--|--|
| a) Sex (girls) | | These three are
clearly implied
in this passage. |
| b) Power (glory) | | |
| c) Money (gold) | | |

A Church with court cases is a poor witness for Christ.

3:8-13, Qualifications of Deacons and their wives —

THE END:

Bishops (v7) — Testimony among outsiders
Deacons (vv9,13) — Bold proclamation of faith

3:15, What a Church should be —

God’s greatest concern:

“A sick Church in a dying world!”

To recruit ← a) A House — To bring IN the people
Isa 56:6,7... foreigners & all nations!

To rear ← b) The Church of the Living God
To bring UP (*living stones*) 1 Pet 2:4,5
... Growth and sacrifice of praise

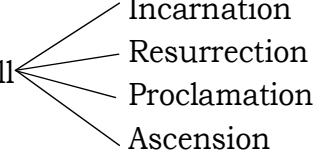
To reach out ← c) The Pillar & Ground of Truth —
To send OUT people from ...
(*Woe to Zion at ease* ... Am 6:1-6)

Calling people for true deliverance by truth!

3:16, Another definition of the Gospel —

This is in the form of a “hymn!”

This should be our song all the day long!

Gospel in a nutshell 

Emphasis: “*Gentiles ... world*”

Key texts to memorize: Jn 1:12

3:16

1 Jn 1:9

1 Timothy

Chapter 4

4:1-5, The devil weakens the witness of the Church by false doctrines which shake up the basic faith.

Deceptions / Deviations / Distractions

4:6-8, The ministers should have regular teaching sessions to keep the believers well-established in the faith (Eph 4:11,14)



“for the work of the ministry” (v11)

“Prevention is better than cure!”

A Church which is weak in its faith and conviction will be weak in evangelism also

— Because,

Evangelism is the outward expression of the inner experience!

“Revival and Evangelism” (Psa 51:12,13)

Exercising unto godliness — 1 Tim 4:7,8

i.e. Spiritual renewal and rejuvenation

Fasting, self-examination, worship, etc.

4:10, *“To this end”* ... Salvation of God



Promise of life NOW and HEREAFTER ... v8

“Saviour of ALL MEN”

4:12, a) *Let no one despise you!*

First, example to believers

Then, evangelism to unbelievers

b) Don't despise the youth!

The cine world, the political world,
and all worlds are after the youth.

The Church's failure to attract the youth.

There was challenge in the message of Christ to attract His young disciples —

A question to preachers & pastors:

Do you address young people?

eg) The wisest preacher — *“O young man ...”*
(Prov 1:4; Eccl 12:1)

Paul to Timothy, Titus ...

John the Apostle ... *“I write to you young men ...”* (1 Jn 2:13,14)

Youth will easily detect “hypocrisy!”

Alternative for “wine & music” — Eph 5:18,19

4:12-16, Personal attention to every detail of the life of youth —

a) Character (v12)

b) Gifts and talents (v14)

c) Meditation and practice (vv15,16)
(Bible Study aids)

d) Physical health (5:23)

(Paul regularly prayed for Timothy —

2 Tim 1:3,4)

1 Timothy

Chapters 5 & 6

Church discipline —

Older men, younger women (sisters) (5:1,2)

Absolute purity

Avoid questionable things.

Widows, Elders, etc.

Taking care of family (5:8)

Caring for the body (5:23)

A disciplined Church is a powerful voice in its locality

— We are in a world of indiscipline and chaos.

6:1,2, Exemplary public life in the workspots gives a pulpit for evangelism.

eg) Daniel — Darius (Den of Lions)

Lifestyle evangelism!

“Let men see your works and glorify God”

(Mt 5:16)

Doctrine & Deeds should not contradict

(1 Tim 6:3)

“Be” a witness! Walking epistles for men to read!

6:6-10, Vanity of riches

“Godliness a means to financial gain” (v5b)

Today’s trend. How to go to US?

Evil of the love of money.

The danger of the prosperity doctrine.

Material-mindedness is an enemy of Missions and Evangelism (vv11,12)

eg) Demas (2 Tim 4:10)

Fruitlessness of plant in thorny ground

(Mt 13:22)

Going overseas for gold and silver!

Going to other States for God and souls?

Don’t we have C.T. Studds today?

6:11, Do all things which are possible to develop these virtues.

—Character development along with our ministry

6:12-16, Evangelism is a Royal Ministry.

eg) Jesus before an earthly leader (Jn 18:33-38)

We are serving the King.

Our message — *“Your King Reigns”* (Isa 52:7)

Bringing people into the Kingdom.

God’s Rule on their lives.

6:17-19, Commands to the Rich

Don’t treat the rich on a pedestal.

“Command” them — Don’t go after them!

Liberal sharing to God’s work and the poor

Teaching on giving

Evangelism and social concern

Attesting sign of Christ’s Messianic ministry—

“The poor have the Gospel” (Mt 11:5)

Rightists vs. Leftists (Mt 25:31-46)

“God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor 9:7-9)

↑

Context: Charity (v1)

Only caution: Don't change the order!
First preach; then heal!
A leper can go to Heaven if saved,
not an unsaved sinner!

6:20,21, Science, another challenge to evangelism.
Our young people have problems.
Christian professors known for their evangelical
faith should address the youth in the Church
regularly on current topics —
Prophetic fulfilment: *"increase in knowledge"*
(Dan 12:4)

2 Timothy

- 1 Timothy — Written after Paul's release from prison in Rome — AD 62/63 (House arrest, Acts 28:30)
2 Timothy — Written during his imprisonment again under Nero — AD 66/67 (Cold dungeon, 1:16; 4:13)
Paul wrote this letter when he knew his work was done and his life was about to end.

I will leave out here the truths which we have already studied in the First Epistle.

Chapter 1

- 1:3**, *"Clear conscience"* — a must in the ministry.
Never sacrifice it!
1:5, *Grandmother & mother*
The need for godly homes.
When the home is in order, the Church will be in order; when the Church is in order, the country will be in order.
Don't expect the Church to do what you are to do at home.
1:6,7, *Stir up the gift ... spirit of power ...*
Basic requirements of a soulwinner —
A spirit of POWER — God
A spirit of LOVE — Men
A spirit of SELF-DISCIPLINE (NIV) — Self
Holy Spirit and Evangelism
Acts 1:8 (Cold preachers make bold sinners!)

4:31 Rifles without bullets!

10:38 Electrical fittings without power!
(Frequent renewals by waiting.)

Timothy's natural fear (1 Cor 16:10,11) x
Supernatural power

1:8-11, Do not be ashamed of the Gospel!

Everytime we want to testify before a world
of mockery, we need to overcome this complex!

Jesus: *"If any man is ashamed ..."* (Mk 8:38)

Why we need not be ashamed —

- + Our message ... Gospel is God's power
(from God) Rom 1:16 — Billy Graham
whether in Africa or Cambridge!
- + Our means ... We are given the Spirit of power
(of God) 2 Tim 1:7,8
- + Our Master ... We are safe in God's hand
(is God) 2 Tim 1:12

1:15-17, All in Asia forsook me ...

Only Onesiphorus' household ...

Be encouraged, there will be always one
Onesiphorus!

Usually only a minority stands firm and active
in God's work —

It is God's significant minority!

"Little flock, fear not ... Kingdom to you!"

Don't fear lions! (2 Tim 4:16-18)^(Lk 12:32)

1:16-18, "my chain"

Help any preacher in trouble (vv16-18)

Faithful witnessing may mean imprisonment.
Persecution is part of Gospel work.
"witnesses = martyrs" (Acts 1:8)
11 out of 12 disciples died as martyrs.

Chapter 2

2:1,2, Principle of reproduction

Paul → Timothy → Faithful men → Others
Discipleship programmes.

Leadership crisis in the Church because we
don't prepare the next generation of leaders.

Jesus spent most of His time with the twelve.
They went all over the world.

2:3-7, hardship ... endurance ... suffering ... death ...

Soulwinner —

- (a) *Soldier* — Battlefield — Please the head
- (b) *Athlete* — Sportsfield — Obey the Rules
- (c) *Farmer* — Cultivation field — Work hard
(Participation while preparation) (v15)

2:19-22, Solid foundation of God

A holy minister is an awful instrument
in the hands of God!

— R. M. McCheyne (1813-1843)

Basic for any minister —

a) *Flee lusts ...* v22

b) *Fellowship with the godly ...* v22

(Don't be a loner!)

The Gospel is a message of righteousness,
and it must be backed with a life of righteousness.

2:23-26, Avoid all unnecessary arguments

eg) Jehovah Witnesses & such cults

Winning arguments but losing the souls!

(Operation successful but patient died!)

Convincing vs. Convicting

Chapter 3

3:1-5, *Perilous times of last days prediction.*

Self-pleasing

Love of money

Self-boasting

Disobedient children

Uncontrolled passions

Sensual pleasures

Powerless religion, etc.

Going from bad to worse —

Need greater anointing —

eg) Times of Elijah vs. Times of Elisha.

To be a witness for Christ in such a situation is not
easy! (vv12,13)

The temptation to be like them will be pretty strong.

— We must boldly stand “alone!”

Don’t yield to the pressure of times.

3:14-17, Holy Scriptures and their profit.

Regular meditation and learning.

Sufficient time to be spent on it.

The man of God equipped by —

(a) Being taught (c) Being corrected

(b) Being rebuked (d) Being trained

Keep growing! Never stop studying!

Let our audience drink from a running
river rather than a stagnant pool!

Chapter 4

4:2, *“In season and out of season”*

Don’t look for convenient and conducive
atmosphere — Eccl 11:1,2,6

“Serving to seven and to eight ...”

Sowing in the morning and in the evening”

“Rebuke and encourage” — A balanced approach

Hell & Heaven — eg) Jesus’ preaching

+ Rich man & Lazarus

+ Goat & Sheep

4:3-5, ... Demand for the entertaining preachers!

Not even milk but watery milk and finally
milky water!

When we go to restaurants, we want strong food,
not simple food;

but in the House of God, we want simple food!

4:6, *“poured out as a drink-offering”*

Let’s do our maximum for God.

No progress without sacrifice!

4:7,8, Fought and finished! Now a Crown!

This must be our testimony.

4:9-19, Paul was literally a missionary movement!

□ Faithful workers —

Luke, Mark, Tychicus, Erastus, Trophimus,
Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia.

□ Dissident workers —

Demas, Alexander

4:17,18, A testimony to what Jesus promised in the
Great Commission

“Lo, I am with you always!”

John Wesley had many problems and
oppositions in his ministry, but at the end he
said,

“The greatest of all is that God is with us!”

The Epistle to the Hebrews

Outlines of Sermons
preached in the Blessing Centre,
Vellore, India,
from January to August 1984



The Epistle to the Hebrews

Next to the Book of Romans, the Epistle to the Hebrews is the most sustained work of theology in the Bible. Unfortunately this Book is the least read, the least studied and the least preached among the New Testament books. This Epistle is like a miniature Bible, beginning with “*God*” (Heb 1:1; Gen 1:1) and ending with the “*Heavenly City*” (Heb 13:14/Rev 21:2). There are nearly ninety direct references to the Old Testament in Hebrews.

The New Testament Epistles can be categorized as nine Christian Church Epistles (Romans to 2 Thessalonians), four Pastoral and Personal Epistles (1 Timothy to Philemon), and nine Hebrew Christian Epistles (Hebrews to Revelation). We read about the Temple in Rev 11:1,2). As Romans is the first of the Church Epistles, Hebrews is the first of the Hebrew Christian Epistles. Hebrews is an anonymous book. Though in certain places its language is like Paul’s, there’s no conclusive proof of his authorship. To the age-old question about the authorship of this book, the right answer is, “Only God knows!” The authorship is unknown just like the ancestry of Melchizedek (Heb 7:3).

The author of Hebrews neither names himself nor clearly designates his audience. But his usage of the words, “*fathers*” and “*us*” in the opening lines indicates that he was a Jew and his readers were primarily Jews. The title, “*To the Hebrews*,” is not from the author’s hands, but it was dated as early as the second century. Most likely this Epistle was written during the persecution

under Nero, perhaps just before the destruction of the Temple (8:4,13; 9:4-9; 10:11; 13:11). Under persecution and apparent delay in the Lord’s Coming, the believers had begun to waver and abandon hope (10:32-39). They were about to renounce Christ and revert back to the security of the Jewish religion and the protection of the Roman law. Similar situation is likely to arise in India under the aggressive promotion of Hindutva. The Epistle has the timely message for us Indian Christians.

The author was encouraging the harassed and oppressed believers to take a new grip with their “*tired hands*” and stand firm on their “*shaky legs*” (12:12). The fear of persecution and the temptation to return of Judaism was the twin crisis of the first recipients of this Epistle. Christ Jesus is called the “Apostle” in this Epistle only (3:1). The Latin version of this title gives us the word “Missionary.” Let’s fix our eyes on our Apostle lest we grow weary in missionary work.

Keeping in mind the oscillation of a section of believers between Jesus and Judaism, the writer of Hebrews establishes the supremacy and the sufficiency of Christ to say that He is the ultimate. He points out the supremacy of Christ over the prophets (1:1-3), over the angels (1:4-2:18), over Moses (3:1-19), over Joshua (4:1-13), over Aaron (4:14-7:18), and over the rituals of Judaism which were only a shadow whereas Christ is the substance (7:19-10:39). The main subject of this book is Christology. I published the Outlines (page 456), each as an essay, as a 128-page book titled, *Jesus is Sufficient*, (now titled as *Open Heaven*), in 1995.

The life of Christ is beautifully outlined in this Epistle: Incarnation (1:2; 2:16,17), Earthly ministry (5:7-9), Crucifixion (6:6; 7:27; 9:12,14,28; 10:10,12,14,19,29; 13:12,20), Resurrection (13:20), Ascension (4:14; 6:20), Heavenly ministry (2:9; 7:25; 8:1; 9:12,24; 10:12,13), and Second Coming (9:28). And finally, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever” (13:8). The words “*better*,” “*more*” and “*greater*” together, referring to the New Covenant and Jesus the Mediator, appear about 25 times in this Epistle. This book contains a series of contrasts between the “good” things of Judaism and the “better” things of Christ.

This Epistle is an inspired commentary on the Levitical system prescribed in the Book of Leviticus. The author sets forth the imperfection of the Aaronic priesthood and that of the sacrifices. The three main topics are Priesthood (7:1-28; 10:19-22), Sacrifice (9:11-10:18), and Covenant (8:8-13; 9:15-22). No other book in the New Testament ties together the OT history and practices with the life of Christ as thoroughly as the Book of Hebrews. Lest anyone be bogged down by the details presented in this Epistle, the author gives a summary in 8:1, “*Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.*” The author points out the three appearances of Jesus: (1) Past appearance to sacrifice Himself (9:26), (2) Present appearance before God in Heaven (9:24), and (3) Future appearance for our total salvation (9:28). The words, “Heaven” or “Heavenly,” occur fifteen times. Yes, Christianity is heavenly and spiritual

as against the ceremonies and blessings of Judaism which were earthly and physical. Today’s prosperity doctrine is the modernised Judaism. The message of the Gospel is eternal: *Eternal salvation* (5:9), *Eternal judgment* (6:2), *Eternal redemption* (9:12), *Eternal Spirit* (9:14), *Eternal inheritance* (9:15) and *Eternal Covenant* (13:20).

After writing on the Pre-eminence of Christ (1:4-4:13) and the Priesthood of Christ (4:14-10:18), the author of the Epistle speaks about the Perseverance of Christians (10:19-13:25). Divine assurance and human perseverance are balanced by the author. Assurance without perseverance can degenerate into presumption; and perseverance without assurance can become salvation by works and not God’s grace. May be some of the readers stopped joining the local assembly gatherings for fear of being identified as Christian believers (10:24,25). This was of course foretold and forewarned by Jesus (Mt 10:17; 23:34; Mk 13:9). There are six warnings with the word “*lest*” (Heb 2:1; 3:12; 3:13; 4:11; 12:3; 12:15). The danger signals ring with the words “*Do not ... but*” (2:1; 3:6,14; 4:11,12; 6:1-3; 13:8,9). The word “*today*” occurs thrice pertaining to us (3:7,15; 4:7) and twice pertaining to Christ (5:5; 13:8). This tells us of the relevance of the message of this Epistle to us today. This book’s particularism runs counter to the modern world’s pluralism. Christ is the only way. His Gospel is superior to all religious and philosophies including the OT Judaism.

The strong words in Hebrews 6:4-8 are heatedly discussed by preachers and Bible scholars of divergent

persuasions. I personally believe that this passage, according to the context of the entire Epistle, condemns total apostasy rather than general backsliding. This is about leaving Jesus for Judaism, or Christ for cults, or the living God for idols (1 Jn 5:16-21). Otherwise there's no sin that cannot be washed by the blood of Jesus (1:9; Psa 51:7; Isa 1:18). The practical exhortations in Hebrews following each doctrinal passage must be taken seriously. There are at least 15 exhortations beginning with the words, *"Let us ..."* (4:1,11,14,16; 6:1; 10:22,23,24; 12:12,28; 13:1,5,13, 15,17). Yes, this Epistle skillfully blends expositional and exhortative material. Christianity is a *"heart"* religion (3:8-15; 4:7,12; 10:22; 13:9). Beware of a superfluous religion of rituals!

Fair-weather Christianity finds no comfort in the Book of Hebrews. It has glorious promises as well as grim warnings. The Faith Chapter, Hebrews 11, speaks both of blessings experienced and buffetings endured. Whatever be the struggle, the *"Captain of our Salvation"* goes before us leading us to crowning triumph (2:10). The Epistle which has no introductory greetings ends with a celestial benediction which must be memorized by every Christian: 13:20,21, *"May the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen!"*

Chapter Titles of Sermons

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Hebrews Chapter 1

Inheritance through Christ

Introduction

“Son, heir of all things” (v2)

“By inheritance obtained a more excellent name” (v4)

“those who will inherit salvation” (v14)

Fourfold inheritance in Christ studied on the basis of contrasts or comparisons in this chapter —

(1) The Word of God (vv1,2) — Prophets/Christ

- + Hearing God’s voice an unique blessing
(Dt 4:32,33,36,8)
- + No Word — days of darkness (1 Sam 3:1-3)
eg) Dark Ages
- + Prophets are God’s general agents of communication
(Num 12:6/Am 3:7) (In fragments, of course)
- + In Christ the Word came to us in ALL FULNESS
(Jn 1:1,14) “*with God*” → “*among us*”
- + Our rebirth is through the Word (1 Pet 1:23)

(2) The Throne of God (vv3,8,13) —

Purging/Triumphing

- Examples of these two aspects of crowned life —
 - Psa 110:1-3 Purity + Power
 - Rev 1:5,6 Priests — Purity/Kings — Power
 - 1 Pet 2:5,9 Holy Priests / Royal Priests

- + Christ’s purity + power are ours —
Jn 17:19 / 1 Cor 1:30,31 — Purity
Jn 16:33b / 1 Jn 4:4 — Power

- + Be occupied with the meditation of the Throne blessings Col 3:1-4 “*mind*”

(3) The Spirit of God (v9) — Christ/His Companions

- + Christ given the Spirit beyond measure
Jn 3:34-36

- + Christ pours it out on us!
Mk 1:8/Acts 2:33

The Gift of the Spirit is in Christ
Acts 2:38

- + Illustration of this truth
Psa 133:1,2 ... “*brothers ... head ... Aaron*”

(4) The Angels Of God — Angels/Christ

- + Angels and our sonship (v5)
Jn 1:12 / Heb 2:14-16

Christ is the first-born and angels worshipped God at His birth! (v6).

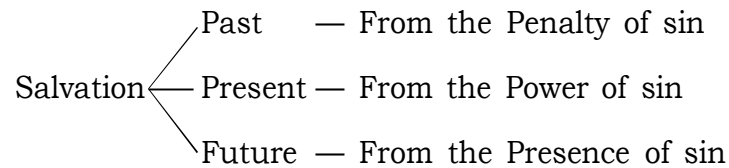
We are His fellow-born and angels worship God (rejoice) at our rebirth! (Lk 15:10)

Angels are made spectators of us!
1 Pet 1:10,12 (*our salvation*)

- + Angels and our Rulership (vv13,14)
Rev 5:9-12 ... *They sang ... we are made
priests and kings*
1 Cor 6:3 ... *We shall judge angels*
Angels are made servants to us!

Conclusion

These blessings are to enable us inherit the
“*Salvation of God*” in its fulness (v14)



“*To those who eagerly wait for Him, Christ will
appear a second time for salvation, without
bearing sin*” (Heb 9:27,28).

Hebrews Chapter 2

Why Salvation is Great

“*so great salvation*” (v3); “*author of salvation*” (v10);
“*inherit salvation*” (1:14)

Greatness of Salvation —

(1) Testimony of Godhead (vv3,4)

- “*First spoken by the LORD*” — Christ the first
Gospel preacher (Mk 1:15)
Not even Baptist John ← Repentance, NOT faith.
“*GOD confirmed with signs + wonders*” (Mk 16:20)
“*Manifestation of gifts of the SPIRIT*” (Acts 10:44,45)
- Examples of collective witness —
Pre-Pentecost — Mt 3:16,17
Pentecost — Acts 2:32,33
Post-Pentecost — 4:29-31
- Established by 2 or 3 witnesses! (2 Cor 13:1)
Salvation is great because it is absolutely REAL!

(2) Dominion over Creation (vv5-8)

- Compare with Psalm 8
— Man insignificant before hugeness of creation
(Psa 8:3,4)
— Man smaller than angels because limited to
space + time (Psa 8:5a/Heb 2:6,7)
He lost his dominion by sin (Gen 1:28).

- But salvation brings man higher than angels!
“Crowning with glory and honour” (v7)
 eg) Prodigal son (Lk 15:18,19,22)
- Our present authority
 Mt 28:18,19 Because of Jesus’ victory
 Lk 10:17-20 Because of Heavenly citizenship
- Our future authority
 v8 — *“not yet”*
 Psa 8:2/Isa 11:6-8,10 *“babes... child... His banner”*
 ↑authority

Salvation is great because it is RESTORATIVE!

(3) Glory through suffering (vv9-11)

- Suffering has made the Leader of Salvation perfect
 Similarly suffering strengthens us (Rom 8:35-39)
 Suffering is not optional for the saved (Acts 14:22)
- Provision by God in salvation while suffering is great!
 a) He succours us (v9) *“grace of God”*
 b) He shepherds us (v10) *“bringing many sons
 unto glory”*
 c) He sanctifies us (v11)

Salvation is great because it is REWARDING!

(4) Membership in God’s Family (vv11-16)

- The blessed positions/titles
“brothers of Jesus” (vv12,17a)
“members of His congregation” (v12)

“children of God” (v13)
“seed of Abraham” (v16)
 Not ashamed! (Jn 20:17)

- The blessed privileges
 The pride — *“I will declare”* (v12)
 The pleasure — *“I will praise”* (v12)
 The protection — *“My trust in Him”* (v13)



He is my FATHER.

- No fear of enemy (vv14,15)
- House of Lord, no fear (Psa 23:4-6)

Salvation is great because it is REJOICING!

(5) Victory in temptations (vv17,18)

- Salvation does not remove temptation,
 lest there is no place for victory!
 Salvation present—Deliverance from the power of sin.
- Victory through the *Captain of Salvation*
 because of — His passion — *“merciful”*
 — His promises — *“faithful”*
 — His priesthood — *“priest”*
 — His power — *“able to”*

Let’s rely or rest on Him!

Salvation is great because it is RESTING!

Conclusion

- “Therefore ... earnest heed ... lest we drift away”* (v1)
- “Transgression and disobedience punished”* (v2)

Hebrews Chapter 3

How to fulfil the Heavenly Calling

Introduction

“Heavenly calling” (v1)

“To the end” ... “beginning to end” — Fulfil
(v6) (v14)

What is Heavenly Calling?

Five references in Hebrews —

- a) Heavenly Gift (6:4) — Gift of Salvation
- b) Heavenly Service (8:4-5) — Priesthood of Believers
- c) Heavenly Purification (9:23) — Sanctification,
Growth in Holiness
- d) Heavenly Country (11:16) — Promotion into His
very Presence
- e) Heavenly City (12:22) — Sharing His very
(Capital) Throne
(Rev 3:21, Ultimate)

TCNT translation — “*Call from Heaven!*”

How to fulfil our Heavenly Calling?

(1) Consider Christ Jesus (Heb 3:1)

- “Consider” = Fix your attention or thoughts on.
- Jesus is the Captain for our journey to Heaven!
(2:10)
- LIKE JESUS should be our theme throughout
 - Desire of the Father (Rom 8:29)
 - Desire of the Son Himself (Eph 4:11-13)
 - Desire of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 3:18)
 - Desire of the Apostles (Col 1:28/1 Cor 11:1)

— Two main aspects to follow:

- a) *Apostle* — From God to man — Proclamation
(Mt 4:19)
- b) *High Priest* — From man to God — Prayer
(Lk 11:1,2)

A Balanced Life!

(2) Be faithful (vv2-5)

Faithfulness = loyalty

- a) As a Son like Jesus (Jn 8:35)
 - + Total Surrender (:28,42)
 - + Unbroken Fellowship (:29)
 - + Honouring God (:49,50,54)
(no self-glory)
- b) As a Servant like Moses (Num 12:7)
 - + Humility & Meekness (:3)
 - + Close Communion with God (:8)
 - + Love & Forgiveness (:13)

“Son” — Privilege — Father God

“Servant” — Responsibility — Lord God
Hold these together!

(3) Hold fast till the end (v6)

Man can live
without food for 40 days
without water for 3 days
without air for 1,2 minutes

Without hope, not even a second!

— This Hope is the Person of Christ Himself (v14)

Col 1:27

Jer 14:8

1 Tim 1:1

More than hoping on Him.

a) Confidence of Hope (Inward Assurance)

The Process of Development (Rom 5:3-5)

The Holy Spirit grows hope through trials.

b) Rejoicing of Hope (Outward Acclamation)

Paul in chains (Acts 28:20)

Peter to the Church (1 Pet 3:15)

(4) Keep the heart good (vv7-19)

a) Soft heart (vv8,13) x Disobedience (v18)

b) Steady heart (v10) x Unbelief (v19)

The opposite is “*evil heart*” (v12)

How to keep the heart good —

+ Obey instantly the voice of the Spirit from the Word
(v15)

+ Limit not the power of God at times of crisis and
need (vv8-10)

Don't ask, Can God?

But affirm, God can!

+ Exhort one another daily (v13)

Lone life not possible.

Conclusion

The end of the Heavenly calling is “*His Rest*” (v18).

It is explained in the next chapter.

Hebrews Chapter 4

God's Rest for God's People

(A) What is the “Rest”?

a) Bondage to Bounty

Egypt → Wilderness → Canaan

Canaan is the earthly foretaste of the Heavenly Rest
(v8)

i.e. Deliverance from the PENALTY of sin.

b) Temptation to Triumph (vv14-16)

Weakness, Temptation, Need → Throne of Grace

Through the heavens (Sympathy, Victory)

i.e. Deliverance from the POWER of sin.

c) Works to Worship (vv4,9,10)

Days of Creation → Day of Rest or Celebration!

(Gen 2:2)

i.e. Deliverance from the very PRESENCE of sin.

This is the Rest that Jesus promised —

(Mt 11:28-30)

a) Rest by coming to Him

— *Labour + Heavy load* — Past

(Egyptian bondage)

b) Rest by taking His yoke — *Yoke + Burden*

(The Cross of Jesus) — Present

(High Priest's help)

- c) Rest by learning from Him
 — *Gentle + lowly heart* (The relaxed and quiet, non-turbulent Presence of God) —

Future
 (Eternal worship)

Thus, the Rest has 3 aspects (Past, Present & Future)
 Past is over — Now Present and Future (Enjoy, Enter)

(B) How to enjoy/enter God's Rest?

(1) Mix the Word with faith (v2)

- The Word does not profit if there's no faith
 (Mk 6:1-6 ... Jesus in Nazareth)
- The Word is God's Power to us in proportion to faith (1 Cor 1:18/Eph 1:19)
- Examples of application of personal faith
 - Mary ... Spiritual blessing (Lk 1:38)
 - Peter ... Material blessing (5:5)
 - Centurion ... Physical Blessing (7:7)

Keep saying "YES" in your spirit to every page of the Bible. Someone wrote 'Yes' on every page!

(2) Walk diligently with obedience (v11)

- No substitute for obedience
 (1 Sam 15:22,23)
- Real faith leads to implicit obedience
 (Heb 11:8 By faith Abraham obeyed)
- Christ the perfect Example of obedience
 (Phil 2:5,8/Heb 5:8,9)

- The only way to enjoy the land of rest
 (Isa 1:19)

eg) C. T. Studd — old age — torn Bible

Devil's lie: "It's difficult to obey God" (1 Jn 5:3)
 Paul's boasting of being a "*slave*" of Jesus!
 (Rom 1:1; Tit 1:1)

(3) Live honestly with accountability (vv12,13)

- Realisation of God's Omniscience (13a) (Psa 139:1-6)
- Application of God's Word (v12) (Psa 19:7,11-13)
Errors → Secret faults → Presumptuous sins → Great transgression

eg) Apply the Scriptures personally
 "Lord, is it I?" (Mk 14:18,19)

- Subjection to God's scrutiny (Psa 139:23,24)

(4) Confess faith with steadfastness (v14)

What to confess?

- a) Christ is the "*Son of God*"
 — Victory over the world (1 Jn 5:5)
- b) He passed "*through the heavens*"
 — Victory in the heavenly places (Eph 6:12)
 eg) Dan 10:12,13
- c) He is the "*great High Priest*"
 — Victory at God's Throne
 (Devil the Adversary vs. Christ the Advocate)
 1 Jn 2:1

Therefore, keep confessing! (Rev 12:10,11)

(5) Approach the Throne with boldness (vv15,16)

— Today Throne of Grace, Tomorrow Throne of Glory!
Life of Rest today not without temptations.

Jesus — Peter (Lk 22:30-32)

— Hesitate not to come to God for help.

He is NEVER weary of helping us (Isa 40:28-31)

Someone said: Instead of going to the Throne,
I will be staying by the Throne!
That is, “waiting on the Lord!”

Conclusion:

Hebrews 4 is the interpretation of Psalms 95 —

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|------------|
| 1) Faith | — “Our God” | (Psa 95:7) |
| 2) Obedience | — “Our King” | (:3) |
| 3) Accountability | — “Our Maker” | (:6) |
| 4) Steadfastness | — “Our Rock” | (:1) |
| 5) Boldness | — “Our Shepherd” | (:7) |

□ “Let’s worship and bow down and kneel before Him”
— Obedience

□ “Come before His Presence with thanksgiving”
— Bold approach

□ “Shout joyfully to the Rock of our Salvation”
— Confession

Hebrews Chapter 5

How to fulfil our Priestly Ministry

Introduction

- A chapter on priesthood

Aaron	(v4)
Christ	(v5)
Melchizedek	(v6)
- Lessons from this chapter applicable to us
since ALL believers are priests —

Today	: 1 Pet 2:5,9; Rev 1:6
Tomorrow	: Rev 5:10; 20:6

How to fulfil our Priestly Ministry —

(1) Intercede for the people

- “among men” ... “for men” ... “to God” (v1)
- + Pray for all people — Salvation (1 Tim 2:1,4)
 - + Pray for God’s people — Restoration
(Joel 1:13,14; 2:17)
 - + Pray for close fellow-Christians — Forgiveness
& Healing (Js 5:16)

(2) Be compassionate towards the weak

- “ignorant” ... “going astray” ... “weakness” (v2)
- + Poor example — Good Samaritan story (Lk 10:31)
 - + Identify with the afflicted (Heb 2:17,18)
 - + Greatness of this humble ministry (Js 5:19,20)
 - + Warning: love and watchfulness (Gal 6:1,2)

(3) Maintain personal purity

“for himself” ... “to offer” (v3)

- + We are a holy priesthood (1 Pet 2:5,9)
- + God’s standard for priests (Ezek 44:21,31)
 “Others can; I can’t!”
- + Christ’s example (Jn 17:19)
- + Zechariah, John’s parents (Lk 1:5,6,75)

(4) Accept suffering for learning (vv7-9)

Twofold purpose of suffering —

- + To learn dependence and obedience
 (v7) (v8)
 “prayers, cries, fear”
- + To become helpers and models (v9)
 (2 Cor 1:4)

(5) Be skilled in the Scriptures (vv12-14)

(Working knowledge of the Scriptures)

- + The basic expectation from a Priest (Mal 2:7)
- + Examples —
 - Melchizedek, bread and wine (Gen 14:18,19)
 - Ezra, heart preparation (Ezra 7:10-12)
 - Israel without teaching priests (2 Chr 15:3)
- + 3-fold purpose of Scripture study & meditation
 - What God speaks about Himself
 - What God speaks about/to me
 - What God speaks about/for others

This is based on the two great commandments —

Mt 22:36-40

Love God — spiritual
Love yourself — natural
Love neighbour — supernatural

- + Don’t fear opposition/resistance
 Jer 18:18,
 *“Come let us devise plans against Jeremiah ...
 Let us attack him with the tongue ...”*

 Isa 54:17,
 *“No weapon formed against you shall prosper ...
 This is the heritage of My servants.”*

Hebrews Chapter 6

Antidotes for Backsliding

Introduction

“fall away” (v6) “until the end” (v11)

(A) Awfulness of Backsliding

- Seriousness (vv4-6)
- Degrees of Backsliding
 - Loss of first love + fervour (Rev 2:4,5)
 - Loss of holiness + victory over sin (Js 5:19,20)
 - Loss of sound faith + doctrine
(2 Tim 2:16-18, 24-26)
 - Open denial & rejection of Christ (Heb 12:16,17)
This is apostasy. Repentance not possible
in human terms \cong Heb 6:6

Backsliding is never sudden, it's always in stages.

eg) Psa 1:1, *walk ... stand ... sit!*

(B) Antidotes for Backsliding

(1) Not foundation but perfection (vv1,2)

- These six principles are basic and important.
- They are but only elementary/foundational
eg) Elementary School $\begin{array}{r|l} 1+1 & = 2 \\ 1 \times 1 & = 1 \\ 1-1 & = 0 \end{array} \left| \begin{array}{l} \text{All thro' life!} \end{array} \right.$

But laying the foundation again and again is meaningless.

- The superstructure must be built.
i.e. Pressing on to the High Calling of God

“Go on to perfection” (v1)

Phil 3:12-15, “Behind ... forward ...
upward ... mature”

(2) Not thorns but fruits (vv7,8)

- God's SPIRIT is rain (Isa 44:3)
Response: a) Character (Gal 5:22,23)
(Thorns \cong works of flesh)
b) Witness (Acts 1:8/2:17)
- God's WORD is rain (Dt 32:1-2)
Response: a) Faith (Rom 10:17)
(Thorns \cong unbelief, no confidence)
b) Growth (1 Pet 2:2)
c) Strength (Acts 20:32)
- God's GRACE is rain (Ezek 34:26/Zech 12:10a)
Response: Victory over sin (Rom 6:14)
(Thorn \cong sin, Heb 6:8)

Receive an ample supply of God's rain and respond fruitfully!

(3) Not selfishness but sharing (vv9,10)

- Material sharing brings spiritual blessing
 - Enrichment of soul (Prov 11:24-26)
 - Fruits of righteousness (2 Cor 9:1,8-10)
 - Great grace in ministry (Acts 4:32,33)
 - Harvest of eternal life (Gal 6:8-10)

When the soul is enriched, righteousness multiplied, grace outpoured and eternal life enjoyed, backsliding becomes difficult!

(4) Not sluggishness but diligence(vv11-12,13-20)

- What is diligence?
 - a) Holding the full assurance of hope (v11)
 - Rom 8:38,39 ... None can separate
 - 2 Tim 1:12 ... Keep what's committed
 - Phil 1:6 ... Complete what's begun
 - b) Imitating the forefathers of faith & patience (v12)
 - eg) Abraham (v15)
 - Witnesses in Hebrews 11
 - Our present leaders (Heb 13:7)
 - c) Taking refuge in the presence of God (vv18-20)
 - Prov 18:10 ... Run in when chased
 - Psa 91:1-3 ... Snare of the fowler
 - 1 Jn 2:1 ... Jesus the Advocate,
our Forerunner

Hebrews Chapter 7

Melchizedek and Christ

Introduction

This is the middle chapter of Hebrews.

Theme of the Book: “*Christ our High Priest*” (8:1)

(A) Christ compared with Melchizedek

<u>Melchizedek</u>	<u>Christ</u>
1. King of Righteousness (v2)	The Lord our Righteousness, The Branch (Jer 33:15,16)
2. King of (Salem) Peace (v2)	“Jerusalem ... behold your King!” (Zech 9:9)
3. No father, no mother (v3)	Son of <u>God</u> (Lk 1:35) i.e. The seed was not of an earthly father.
4. No beginning, no end (v3)	From the beginning, He was with God (Jn 1:1,2) — i.e. eternal past, before time was ever calculated
5. No genealogy (vv3,6) — i.e. Not from Abraham or any known tribe	Christ is not from the priestly tribe of Levi, but from Judah (Heb 7:13-15)
6. Great! — Even Abraham paid him tithes (v4)	Angel → Mary: “He shall be great!” (Lk 1:32a)
7. Gave Bread + Wine (Gen 14:18)	Gave His Body and Blood (Lk 22:19-20)

8. Priest of God (Gen 14:18b)	Eternal High Priest for us (Heb 6:20)
9. Blessed God as Victor over His enemies (Gen 14:20)	“Enemies made footstool” (Psa 110:1-4)
10. Blessed God as Possessor of Heaven & Earth (Gen 14:19)	All creation in Him, by Him and for Him (Col 1:16)

(B) Mystery of Melchizedek

- 1) He suddenly appeared and so disappeared (Gen 14:18)
- 2) God has not revealed all details about him because it may be too difficult for us to understand or may not be necessary (Heb 5:11; Dt 29:29)
- 3) After the Antitype has come, there is no need to be researching the obscure details of the Type.
Why analyse the shadow when the substance is already on hand?

(C) Blessings from Christ

“Melchizedek blessed Abraham” (v1b)

- 1) Life of Righteousness and Peace (v2)
 - He is our Righteousness (1 Cor 1:31)
 - He is our Peace (Eph 2:14)
 - His rule (Kingdom) over us is of Righteousness and Peace (Rom 14:17).
He is our King!

- 2) Power of an Endless Life (vv15,16)
 - His fatherly care and protection over us is forever and ever.
“Everlasting Father” (Isa 9:6)
 - Indestructibility of the gift of eternal life (Jn 10:28-29)
 - Result of deliverance from sin —
what the Law couldn’t do! (vv18,19/Rom 6:22,23)
- 3) Continuous Intercession (v25)
 - When we are tempted (Heb 4:15,16)
 - When we fail and sin (1 Jn 2:1)
 - When we are condemned (Rom 8: 33,34)

(D) Conclusion

Praise God for such a High Priest —
Eternal (v17), *Unchanging* (v24), *Able* (v25),
Holy (v26), *Perfect* (v28)

Hebrews Chapter 8

New Covenant Blessings

Introduction

“The main point” (v1) —

“WE HAVE A HIGH PRIEST!”

Christ the Majesty (v1) — Throne — Exalted

Christ the Minister (vv2,3) — Sanctuary — Excellent

Christ the Mediator (v6) — Covenant — Established

OT & NT compared:

OT

(v1,2) Earthly sanctuary

(v5) Copy, shadow, model

(v6) Commandments

(v7,8) Faulty, weak,

unprofitable (7:18,28)

(v13) Vanishing

NT

— Heavenly

— True, substance, prototype

— Promises

— Remaining, Eternal

The last book of the OT prophesies of the Coming of the
“Messenger of Covenant” (Mal 3:1)

Four features of the New Covenant

(vv10-12/Jer 31:31-34)

(1) Justification

“I will forgive and forget” (v12)

- Christ is God’s redemptive Agent to forgive sins
Mk 2:5-10 ... *Son of man has power to forgive*
Lk 24:46,47 ... *Remission of sins in His Name*

- *The Blood of Christ cleanses us from ALL sin!*

Mt 26:28 ... *Blood of New Covenant*

1 Jn 1:7 ... *Blood of His Son* ...

Heb10:3,4,12,14 ... *One sacrifice*

- He makes us as if we have never sinned!

Isa 1:18 ... *sins ... scarlet ... snow*

The 4-dimensional manifestation of His love —
(Eph 3:18)

Length — Sins behind His back (Isa 38:17)

Breadth — East and West (Psa 103:12)

Depth — Depths of the sea (Mic 7:19)

Height — Cloud in the sky (Isa 44:22)

(2) Sanctification

“Laws written in mind and heart” (v10)

Explanation: 2 Cor 3:3,6

- Christ gives us a new heart (Not repairing but replacing)
Ezek 36:25-27,29a ... *stone ... flesh*

- The Word within us cleanses us

Jn 6:63 ... Not just letter

15:3 ... *Clean through the Word*

Psa 119:9-11 ... *Cleansing in practice*

The NT is not a set of rules and regulations. It is actually the “WORD” becoming “flesh” in our life (Jn 1:1,14, *tabernacling in us*)

(3) Ministration

“None teach ... all know ... least to greatest” (v11)

- Priesthood — Pre-Mosaic — Family Priesthood
Mosaic — State Priesthood (Tribal)
NT — Church Priesthood

ALL believers are priests (1 Pet 1:5,9; Rev 1:5,6).

Only ONE High Priest — Jesus Christ (Heb 3:1)

No so-called “clergy-laity” distinction.

- Direct access to & revelation of God through CHRIST
Lk 10:21-24 — Not realised by OT prophets
- How about Teachers and other Ministers today?
Eph 4:11/1 Jn 2:26,27
We have them and need them.

But the NT believers are not to be blind followers of a priestly leader but intelligent disciples of Christ, their Lord and Master!

(4) Glorification

“Their God ... My people” (v10)

- 2 Cor 3:14-18

Glorified life means — (veil removed)

a) Liberty — Gal 5:1/Rom 8:1,2

Past ... From the Penalty of sin

Present ... From the Power of sin

Future ... From the very Presence of sin

b) Relationship — Rom 8:15-17 — Present

“Through the Spirit”

Rev 21:3 — Future

“God Himself”

c) Transformation — 1 Jn 3:1,2 ... *Like Him*

Conclusion

This is the NEW COVENANT or the WILL OF GOD
or the PURPOSE OF GOD for us today!

Rom 8:27-30

“His purpose ... foreknew ... predestined ... called ... justified ... glorified”

Everything He allows in our life is to accomplish
fully His WILL or COVENANT in us!

Hebrews Chapter 9

The Tabernacle

Introduction

vv1-5 — Facts about the Tabernacle
in the wilderness

6-28 — Christ entering the Heavenly Tabernacle
and what He has done for us

Study of the Tabernacle

- History and Details

Ex — 13 Chapters (25-38);

Lev — 18; Num 13; Dt 2; Heb 4

Totally 50 Chapters!

- Various names

“Tabernacle” — God dwelling among His people

“Tabernacle of Meeting or Congregation” —

God meeting with His people

“Tabernacle of Testimony” —

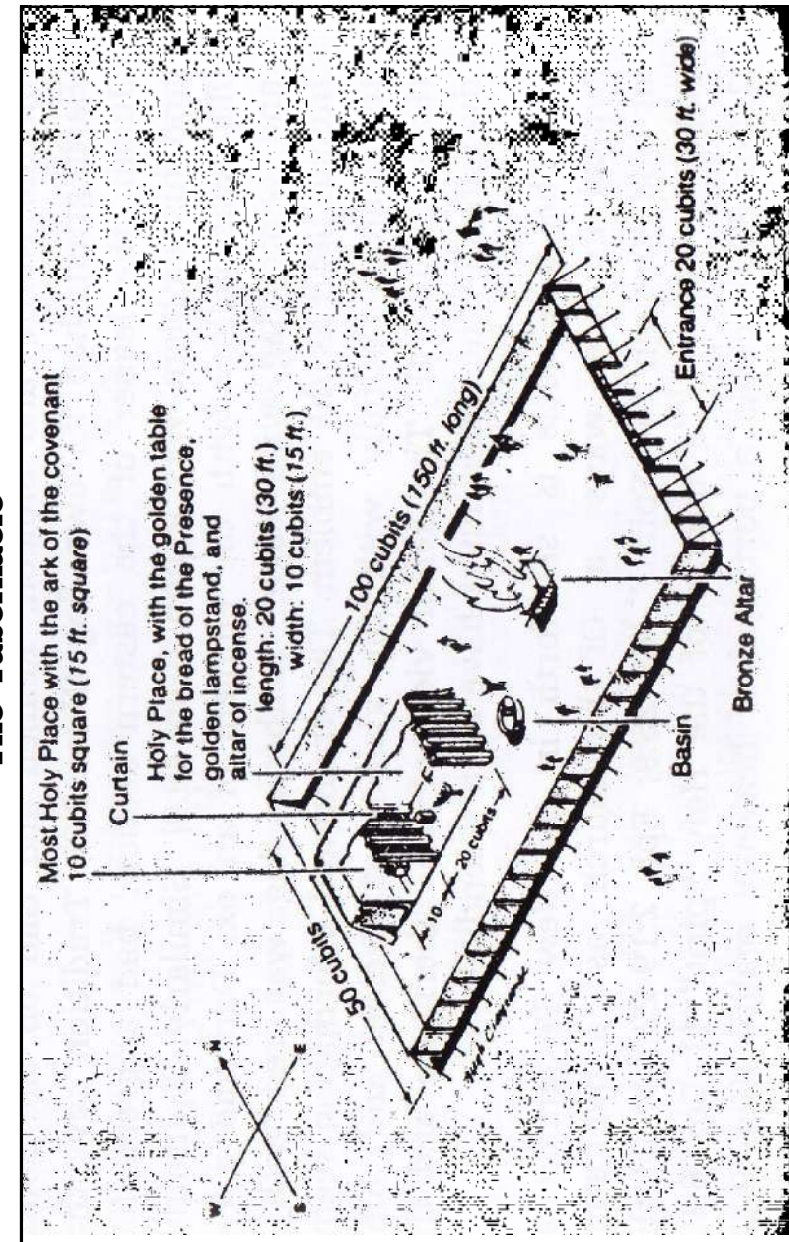
Tables of Law kept there and

God speaking from it

- Plan and overall measurement —

See next page →

The Tabernacle



- Courts & Contents:
 - a) *Outer Court* — Brazen Altar, Laver
 - b) *Inner Court* — Candlestick, Table of Showbread, Altar of Incense
 - c) *Innermost Court* — Ark, Mercy Seat
- Meaning of the contents —
 - (1) Brazen Altar** (Ex 27:1-8)
 - For Burnt-offering — Christ offered for our justification
 - Heb 9:12,26,28a — He is our Sacrifice!
 - (2) Laver** (Ex 30:17-21)
 - For the washing of hands + feet of the Priests — Christ our Sanctification (1 Cor 1:30) Heb 9:14 — Christ washing the feet of the disciples, not the whole body (Jn 13:6-10)
 - (3) Candlestick** (Lampstand) (Ex 25:31-40)
 - a) Christ is the Light of the World (Jn 8:12)
 - b) Church is the Light of the World (Rev 1:20/Mt 5:14)
 - (4) Table & Showbread** (Ex 25:23-30)
 - Showbread = Bread of Presence = Represents the 12 tribes of Israel.
 - God is near them, dear to them and He cares for them.

Christ is our Bread (Jn 6:48)
Compare: He gave the bread to the 12 disciples!

(5) Altar of Incense (Ex 30:1-10)

Location: Compare Ex 30:6/Heb 9:3,4
i.e. Though the Altar of Incense was located in the holy place — for daily use (30:7) — its ritual use was connected with the most Holy Place (Lev 16:12,13)

Incense = Prayers (Rev 5:8; 8:3,4)
Christ is our Intercessor (Heb 7:25)

(6) Ark of the Covenant & Mercy Seat

(Ex 25:10-22, especially vv21,22)

- a) Contents of the Ark (Heb 9:4b)
 - Manna — Food from Heaven
 - Aaron's rod — Authority from Heaven (Num 17:5)
 - Tablets — Law from Heaven
 - Christ is all these! — Eat Him; Bow before Him; Obey Him!
- b) Mercy Seat
 - It was a covering for the Ark.
 - Our sins are covered by Christ and we can boldly enter! (Heb 4:15,16)
- The Inner Veil (Ex 26:31-35)
 - 4" thick — renewed every year — Even horses tied to each side couldn't pull it apart (Historian Josephus)
 - It was torn from top to bottom at Christ's death.

- The materials used (Ex 25:1-9)

Gold	— Deity
Silver	— Redemption
Brass	— Judgment
Wood	— Humanity of Christ
Fine Linen	— Righteousness
Oil	— Holy Spirit
Goat's hair & Ram's skin	— Atonement
Badger's skin	— Outward appearance (Humanity) of Christ. Similar to dolphin.

- The colours (Ex 26:31)

Blue	— Heavenly Nature
Purple	— Royalty
Scarlet	— Sacrifice

- The value of materials (Ex 38:21-31)

Gold = 1000 kg	Imagine its value today!
Silver = 4000 kg	
Bronze = 3000 kg	

Look at the willingness of the people!
(Ex 35:5 / 2 Cor 9:7, Cheerful giving)

Blessings/Benefits because Christ entered the Heavenly Tabernacle:

- (1) Forgiveness of sins (Heb 9:15,22,26)
- (2) Standing before God (v24)
- (3) Access in prayer & while tempted (vv8,11)
- (4) Service (v14)
- (5) Eternal Salvation (vv12,28)

Hebrews Chapter 10

Faith - Hope - Love

Introduction

- Ch 7 — The Priestly Ministry of Christ
- 8 — The New Covenant
- 9 — The substance of the Tabernacle

i.e. What GOD has done in the New Covenant

Ch 10 — What WE are to do in the New Covenant

v22 — *Let us draw near with Faith*

v23 — *Let us hold fast our Hope*

v24 — *Let us stir up Love*

- Three Cardinal Virtues of Christian Life —
Faith - Hope - Love

eg) 1 Cor 13:13 1 Tim 6:11
1 Thess 1:3 Heb 6:10-12
5:8

- This chapter is a summary of the next 3 chapters.
11:1 12:1,2 13:1
Faith Hope Love

(1) FAITH: To please God (v22)

- v7, “Behold, I come to do Your will”

It is written in the OT about Jesus.

It is written in the NT about us.

So we must commit to God's will in our life as Christ.

(eg. Paul ... Acts 9:6/22:14)

Will of God | Simple obedience to Word (Mt 7:21,26)
 | Following Spirit's guidance (Rom 8:14,27)
 | Providential circumstances (1 Cor 16:7-9)

Faith accepts God's will as the best way for our life.

- Heb 10:5,10,14 ... "A *body prepared ... sanctification ...*"
 Rom 12:1,2 ... Offer bodies as sacrifice to God
 to please Him.
 1 Thess 4:3-5 ... *God's will ... sanctification ...*
fornication
- Heb 10:19-22 ... Approach Him in faith.
 Sins forgiven, guilt removed, blood protects,
 Christ the High Priest
 Worship & Prayer must be just on faith, not feeling.
 Heb 11:6 ... *Faith ... pleasing God ... prayer*

(2) HOPE: To proclaim to the World (Heb 10:23)

- vv32,33 ... Bold proclamation of the Gospel with
 endurance in the midst of mockery and
 persecution
 Acts 26:6,7 ... Paul before Agrippa
 28:20 ... Paul to certain Jewish elders at Rome
 1 Pet 3:14,15 ... Peter's admonition not to fear the
 opposers but be ever ready to speak
 for the Hope
 Jesus: "If you are ashamed of Me ..."
- v34 ... Liberal giving toward missions
 Treasure in Heaven

+ The widow — *All her living*, Mk 12:44
 + Mary — All her saving
(Gospel all over the world, Mk 14:9)

1 Tim 6:17-19 ... Counsel to the rich

- v37 ... Christ is coming soon!
- 2 Pet 3:3,4 ... Scoffers in the last days
 :9 ... Delay is to enable us fulfil
 the Great Commission
 Mt 24:14 ... *Gospel to all nations ... then end.*

(3) LOVE: To prepare the Church (Heb 10:24)

- v24 — *To stir up love* (a) | +ve
 and good works (b) |
- vv25,26 — Exhort one another lest | -ve
 38,39 there be backsliding (c) |

Eccl 4:9-12 ... The enemy is at constant attack
 (How a sheep gets lost)

Warmth of love Warfare against the enemy

Christ is coming for a Church rich in love and good
 works, which refuses to backslide.

Conclusion

Heb 10:39 "*We are not of those who draw back*"

Let's say: "I cannot come down
 from faith, hope and love!"

Hebrews Chapter 11

The God-pleasing Faith

Introduction

- “Faith” — 24 times
“Pleasing God” — 5 times (vv2,4,5,6,16,39)
- Definitions of Faith:
 - a) *The substance of Hope* (v1)
Assurance, embracing and confession (v13)
 - b) *The evidence of Unseen* (v1)
Invisible God (v27); Unknown direction (v8)
 - c) *The reliance on God* (v6)
“He IS” — His faithfulness (v11);
“He rewards” — His powerfulness (v19)

What is the Faith that pleases God?

(1) It believes God as the CREATOR.

Present worlds (v3) and the future world (vv10,13-16)

That means we believe that —

- a) God’s Word creates (v3/Jn 1:1-3)
- b) God builds an unshakable Kingdom
(v10/Heb 12:28)
- c) We live here temporarily (v13/Jn 18:36)
- d) Our homeland is Heaven (v14/Phil 3:20)
- e) We must live a detached life (v15/Col 3:2,3)
- f) God is OUR God (v16/Psa 48:14)

(2) It believes God as the SAVIOUR.

Salvation for us (v7)

and salvation for future generations (vv20-22)

That means we believe that —

- a) When we believe, God saves us and our family
(v7/Acts 16:31)
- b) We are to warn the world (v7/Acts 20:26,27)
- c) We must be responsible models to future generations (vv20-22/Gen 18:19)
- d) God’s redemption campaign will gallopingly progress (v22/Mt 24:14)

(3) It believes God as the HEALER.

Healing today (v11) and resurrection tomorrow (vv12,19)

That means we believe that —

- a) He is the Lord of our physical life, body
(v11/1 Cor 6:13)
- b) His healing promises are faithful
(v11/Ex 15:26; 2 Cor 13:4)
- c) Nothing is impossible with God (v12)
- d) His spirit shall quicken our mortal bodies and resurrect our dead bodies (v19 / Rom 8:11)

(4) It believes God as the LORD.

Worship (v4) and Obedience (vv17-19)

That means we believe that —

- a) We must honour GOD with our best:
Talent, Time, Treasure (v4/Gen 4:3,4)
- b) We have no merit but Jesus’ Blood (v4/Heb 10:19)

- c) Human logic + God's mind will not match
(v17/Isa 55:8,9)
- d) We are to worship the Blessor rather than the
Blessings (v18/Psa 73:25)

(5) It believes God as the COMFORTER.

Present Suffering, vv23-29,34,35) & Future glory (v5)
That means we believe that —

- a) Suffering is part of His plan (v35/Phil 1:29)
- b) We should choose His grace rather than try to
escape from the situation (v35/2 Cor 12:7-9)
- c) True comfort is from God, not from the world
(vv25,26/2 Cor 1:3,4) (Two Comforters)
- d) Future glory not comparable (v5/Rom 8:18)

(6) It believes God as the VICTOR.

Safety (v31) & Triumph (vv30,33)
That means we believe that —

- a) God knows how to protect us from peril around
us (v31/2 Pet 2:9)
- b) The Gates of Hell cannot prevail against the
Church (v30/Mt 16:18)
- c) All the Kingdoms shall be subdued (v33/Dan 7:27)

Conclusion

“Their” main object of faith → Christ's First Coming!
“*The promises ... The Promise*” (vv13,33,39)
This is Genesis 3:15

The main object of “our” faith → Christ's Second
Coming! (2 Pet 3:4,9,13)

Hebrews Chapter 12

The Christian Race

(A) Hindrances/Hurdles, (B) Helps, (C) Honours

(A) HINDRANCES

(1) Weights (v1)

Cares of this world (Mt 13:22; 6:31-33) ...
undue anxiety
Deceitfulness of riches (Mt 13:22; 2 Tim 4:10)
Being like a dead man (Col 3:1-3)

(2) The ensnaring sin (v1)

Unbelief is THE SIN (Jn 16:8,9; 1 Jn 5:16)
Even after many miracles it easily ensnared Israelites
(Heb 3:19; Psa 106:7,8,12,13)
The first sin was unbelief!

(3) Shame and Hostility (vv2,3)

The world mocks at us (1 Cor 4:9,10a,13)
We are not to be ashamed (Mk 8:38; Rom 1:16)
The Cross is no option (Lk 14:27)

(4) Weariness and Discouragement (vv3b,12)

Elijah like us! (1 Ki 19:4-7)
Wait on God and run! (Isa 40:29-31)
Don't give place to discouragement!

(5) Defective Inter-personal Relationships (vv14,15)

Consideration for fellow-runners (Joel 2:7,8)

Kicking your brother and finishing the race will not be
appreciated by the Lord! (v14b)
Lovelessness blurs our vision of the goal (1 Jn 2:11)
Bitterness is infective (v15b)

(6) Sensual Pleasures (vv16,17)

Self-Control is a must in any race (1 Cor 9:25)
Sin of lust weakens one's spiritual strength
(eg. Samson & Delilah)
It destroys us on the way (1 Cor 10:8)

(7) Disobedience (v25)

As we run, He keeps instructing us from Above!
No light on the track, if we disobey (Isa 8:20)
Obedience keeps us from stumbling (Psa 119:165)
Violation of Rules disqualifies us (2 Tim 2:5)

(B) HELPS

(1) Encouraging Witnesses (v1)

Relay race —
First half: OT Saints / Second half: NT Saints
They did well! (11:2)
Illustration: Moses + Elijah — Jesus (Lk 9:30,31)
The spirits of just men around us (Heb 12:23c)
They speak through OT Scriptures (1 Cor 10:11)

(2) Example of Jesus (v2,3)

He is our Model + Coach (1 Jn 2:6; Lk 6:40)
He went through all our temptations (Heb 4:14,15)
Study the Gospels
(eg. *If the world hates you, remember ...*)

(3) Chastening of God (vv5-11)

It reminds us of His love (v6)
It reminds His Fatherhood + our sonship (vv7,8)
It corrects our errors (vv9,29)
It enables us partake His holiness (v10)
It enables us grow in practical righteousness (v11)
On the whole, it TRIMS us up in the Race!

(4) Company of Saints (vv22,23)

We are not alone! (1 Ki 19:10,18)
The strong will support the weak (1 Thess 5:14)

(5) Blood of Christ (v24)

It protects us from enemy's attacks (Rev 12:11)
It keeps supplying fresh life & vigour (Jn 6:53-55)
It's like GLUCOSE!

(6) Promises of God (v26)

Fear not at the storm midway (Lk 8:22-25)
He has begun, He will finish (Phil 1:6)
He is the Author + Finisher! (Heb 12:2)

(7) Grace of God (v28)

New grace everyday (Lam 3:22,23)
Sufficient grace for all trials (2 Cor 12:9)
Christian Race begins, runs and ends with Grace!
All of Grace!

(C) HONOURS

(1) Jesus the Lamb (v2)

We will see Him face to face!

- (2) Joy of the Master (v2)
 Eternal bliss
 No tears, no sorrow, no death!
- (3) Throne of God (v2)
 Eternal occupation in worship!
- (4) His Holiness (v10)
 Salvation complete!
 “Like Him”
- (5) The Lord God (v14) ... “*see the Lord*”
 We will live forever with the invisible God
 as His sons and daughters!
- (6) Blessings! (v17)
 All that God has prepared ...
 Eye not seen, ear not heard, ...
- (7) The Kingdom (v28)
 Reigning with Him forever and ever!
-
-
-
-
-

Hebrews Chapter 13

Brotherly Love

Introduction

- Rom 13 — Love chapter (vv8-10) — Politics (Roman)
- 1 Cor 13 — Love chapter — Philosophy (Greek)
- Heb 13 — Love chapter — Piety (Jewish)
- This Epistle called, “Epistle of the Open Heavens,” has been so far speaking about man’s relationship with God — except a faint reference in 10:24,25 — but religion is incomplete without its horizontal component. Hence one entire chapter on LOVE!

(1) Towards Strangers (v2) — HOSPITALITY

- Teaching of the Law (Lev 19:33,34)
- Teaching of the Apostles
 (Rom 12:13; 1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8; 1 Pet 4:9)
- Blessings — a) Entertaining angels
 (Gen 18:1-8,13; 19:1,2)
- b) Welcome by the King
 (Mt 25:34,35,38,40)

Strangers, not friends!

(2) Towards Prisoners (v3)— SYMPATHY

- Ministry of Christ is Deliverance (Isa 61:1)
- Injustice in imprisonment
 - + Joseph (Gen 39:20)
 - + John the Baptist (Mt 4:12)

First occurrence in OT & NT

- Three miraculous deliverances in Acts

5:18-20— Apostles

12:4,5,7,8 — Peter

16:23-26 — Paul + Silas

“Remember the prisoners” ... “Visit them”

They are thieves inside — We are thieves outside!

- The King’s welcome (Mt 25:36)

(3) Towards Life-partners (v4) — FAITHFULNESS

- Husband’s faithfulness is LOVE (Eph 5:25)
— more than physical

Wife’s faithfulness is OBEDIENCE (Eph 5:22)

Treat her as a Queen; She will respect you as a King!

- Prescription for successful marriage (1 Cor 13:4-7)
- The last Prophet in OT condemned adultery
(Mal 2:15,16)

The first Prophet in NT condemned adultery
(Mt 14:3,4)

(4) Towards Opposers (vv5,6) — BOLDNESS

- Love of money is the cause for all evil — including hatred + rivalry (v5/1 Tim 6:6-11)

Confidence + Contentment is the antidote!

“The Lord is with me!”

eg) Isaac (Gen 26:19-22)

- Believe God’s promises on the face of opposition
(Isa 54:15,17)

Then it becomes easy to love our enemies!

(5) Towards Ministers (vv7-9,17-19,22-24) — HONOUR

- *Follow* the steady + faithful ministers (vv7-9)
Strange doctrine vs. Grace
Avoid extremes — Food, etc.
- *Obey* the leaders (vv17,22)
Submission to spiritual authority.
Do you have a Shepherd?
- *Pray* for the ministers (vv18,19)
Ministers are not angels;
they have similar problems like us.
- *Salute* the leaders (v24)
Honour with substance (1 Tim 5:17,18)

(6) Towards Christ (vv12-15) — IDENTIFICATION

- He *first* loved us — *“His own blood”* (v12)
No greater love!
He wants our love — *“Do you love Me?”*
- Self-denial, reproach, cross-bearing, ... (v13)
(Mk 8:34,38). Don’t try to escape!
- Mouth always filled with praise; not complaining about present suffering with Christ (vv14,15)

(7) Towards the Poor (v16) — CHARITY

- *“Do good and share”* (Gal 6:7-10)
- *Lending unto the Lord* (Prov 19:17)
Who is poor? — Those who have less than us
and are in need.
Jesus: *“The poor are always with you.”*

- Blessings — Protection and Healing (Psa 41:1-3)

Conclusion

Benediction I — (vv20,21)

*“May the God of Peace ... make you complete
in every good work ...”*

Benediction II — (v25)

“Grace be with you!”

GRACE is God’s enablement to make us complete in every
GOOD WORK! Here is the purpose of the “Everlasting
Covenant” (v20).

The Epistle of James

- 1. Lessons on Prayer**
- 2. Who is a True Christian?**

**Hubli, Karnataka, India
March 1989**



The Epistle of James

When an Epistle is not addressed to a particular Church, it's called a General Epistle. The Epistle of James is the earliest among them (AD 45). The Church began with "twelve tribes scattered abroad" (Acts 2:5-11; Js 1:1). James felt a pastoral responsibility for these scattered sheep.

The name "James" occurs over 40 times in the New Testament relating to at least five men called so. (a) James, Son of Zebedee and Brother of John. He was one of the three among the Twelve; (b) James, Son of Alphaeus, one of the Twelve; (c) James, the oldest half brother of Jesus (Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3; Gal 1:19); He was the full brother of Jude who wrote the Epistle of Jude; (d) James the Less, son of Mary, not Jesus' mother, Brother of Joses (Mt 27:56; Mk 15:40; 16:1; Lk 24:10); (e) James the father of Judas (Lk 6:16; Acts 1:13). The first James was martyred by Herod in AD 42 (Acts 12:2). It's generally agreed that this Epistle was written by James the Lord's brother. Paul arranges the names "James, Cephas, John" in the order in which the Epistles stand (Gal 2:9). James is the Greek equivalent of Jacob.

James was surnamed "James the Just," because of his fairness in his dealings. He was not converted during Christ's earthly ministry (Jn 7:3-10). He probably got saved after Christ's resurrection in His special appearance to him (1 Cor 15:7). Paul calls James an apostle (Gal

1:19), though like himself, not one of the original Twelve (1 Cor 15:5). He was reputedly called "camel knees," because his fervent dedication to prayer caused calluses to develop on his knees. He was a married man like Peter (1 Cor 9:5). Though the half-brother of Jesus, he calls himself as a "Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Js 1:1). His inspiration as an Apostle is expressly referred to in Acts 15:13,19, "Men and brothers, listen to me ... I judge ..."

The Epistle of James is sometimes called the "Proverbs" of the New Testament. Each of the 5 Chapters is packed with pointed illustrations and reminders designed to motivate believers to grasp the truth taught by Jesus: "A tree is known by its fruit" (Mt 12:33). So much of the Sermon on the Mount is reflected in this Epistle: Mt 5:12/Js 1:2; Mt 5:48/Js 1:4; Mt 7:7-11/Js 1:5; 5:15; Mt 5:19/Js 2:10; Mt 5:44/Js 2:8; Mt 6:19/Js 5:2; Mt 6:24/Js 4:4; Mt 7:1,2/Js 4:11. This Epistle can be described as an interpretation of the Old Testament Law and the Sermon on the Mount in the light of the Gospel of Christ. There are about 50 OT references in this Epistle. James brings in Abraham (Js 2:21), Isaac (2:21), Rahab (2:25), Job (5:11) and Elijah (5:17).

It's sometimes argued that there's so much of contradiction between Paul and James. Paul stresses "Justification by faith *without* works" (Rom 4:6). James speaks of "Justification *by* works" (Js 2:24). How do we reconcile this? □ Paul speaks of the futility of works to earn salvation (Eph 2:8,9); James stresses that works are

the evidence of salvation. Paul brings both together: “We are not saved BY works but FOR works” (vv8-10). □ Paul speaks of Christian faith and Jewish works; James speaks of Jewish faith and Christian works. □ Paul’s writings are a commentary on the doctrines from the death and resurrection of Christ; James’ Epistle had a close connection with His teaching, especially the Sermon on the Mount. □ Paul regards faith in the justification of the sinner before God; James, in the justification of the believer evidently before men. □ Paul is doctrinal whereas James is practical.

The prominence of James in the Book of Acts is noteworthy. When Peter after his release from prison met with the prayer team in the house of Mary, John Mark’s mother, he said to those inside, “Go, tell these things to James and to the brothers” (Acts 12:17). In the Jerusalem Council, Peter proposes Gentile freedom (15:7-11), and James shapes the final clauses (vv20,29). When Paul came to Jerusalem after his third Missionary journey, he went to meet James with whom were all the elders (21:18). It’s too obvious that James presided over a Church still zealous for the Law (vv18-24; Gal 2:12).

The Epistle of James is the only book in the NT which gives us a “definition,” not just “description,” of Christianity (Js 1:27). According to him, charity and chastity cannot be separated, and one cannot thrive without the other. This Epistle in essence contrasts the True Religion and False Profession. The word “perfect” figures out several

times: “Perfect work of patience” (1:4), “Perfect gift of God” (v17), “Perfect law of liberty” (v25), “Perfect faith through works” (2:22), “Perfect man through tongue-control” (3:2). The meaning of the root word for “perfect” is “mature.” The necessity of “doing” the Word as well as “hearing” it is the focus of James (1:22-25).

The opening verse calls us to be “joyful in trials” (Js 1:2). The last chapter tells us, “Be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near” (5:8). This Epistle gives us the moral of the Book of Job, the most complicated book in the Old Testament: 5:11, “The end: The Lord is very compassionate and merciful!” The last two exhortations are concerning ministry to the “sick” and the “lost sheep” (vv13-18, 19-20). The heart of Jesus the Healer and the Shepherd!

1

Lessons on Prayer

An analytical study from the Epistle of James

Introduction

- The author:

James — Not one of the 3 of the 12.

But a prominent leader of the Jerusalem Church
and a half-brother of Jesus.

Acts 12:17 ... News of Peter's release

15:13,14 ... Jerusalem Council

1 Cor 15:7,8 ... Post-resurrection appearance

Gal 1:18,19 ... Paul after three years in Arabia

2:9 ... One of the pillars of the Church

- His message is like that of John the Baptist.

Similar to Christ's Sermon on the Mount.

A very practical man —

IN TOUCH WITH NATURE!

eg) 1:6 ... *Wave, Wind*

:10 ... *Wild Flowers*

:11 ... *Sun*

:17 ... *Lights + Shadows*

3:3 ... *Horses*

:4 ... *Ships*

:5,6... *Forest + Fire*

:7 ... *Animals, birds, reptiles, ...*

:8 ... *Poison*

:11 ... *Fresh water/Salt Water*

:12 ... *Figs, Olives, Grapes*

:18 ... *Harvest*

4:14 ... *Mist*

5:2 ... *Moths + Clothes*

:3 ... *Gold + Silver*

:4 ... *Field workers + harvesters*

:5 ... *Fattening for slaughter*

:7,17 ... *Spring rains*

:14 ... *Oil*

:18 ... *Earth + Crops*

Seven Lessons on Prayer:

(1) What to ask?

First of all, WISDOM!

1:5 ... *If anyone lacks wisdom*

3:17,18...The nature of wisdom from Above.

↑ A life of practical Righteousness.

Solomon — 2 Chr 1:7-12

Prov 4:7 — The supreme thing!

Lk 2:52 — The Boy Jesus

Eph 1:17 — Paul's prayer for believers

(2) Ask in faith, without doubting!

1:6-8 ... *doubt ... wave ... wind*

eg) Elijah — 5:17,18

Ordinary man, but extraordinary faith
Not attributed to “gifts,” but “earnestness!”
Mt 21:21,22 — “*The mountain*”

Too many people pray like little boys who knock
at doors, then run away!

(3) Speak less, listen more!

1:19,20 ... *swift to hear, slow to speak*

Waiting before the Lord to quieten our minds
and tell Him of our earnestness.

A worshipful attitude is necessary to have God
speak to us (Acts 13:2)

Eccl 5:1,2 ... *House of God ... hear ... speak*
Avoid vain repetitions! (Mt 6:7)

(4) Beware of the use of tongue!

3:9-12 ... *blessing ... cursing*

Eph 5:4,19 ... *filthy ... foolish talk*

A loose tongue causes leakage of spiritual power.

A Japanese proverb:

A tongue 3 inches long can kill a man 6 feet tall!

Except the tongue, all parts of the body eventually
become tired by evening!

(5) Ask God, don't lust or covet!

4:1-3 ... *desires ... pleasures ...*

Nathan rebukes David: 2 Sam 12:7-9 ...
Already enough

Need or want?
(Prayer usually screens!)

Learn to live without and with less.

Avoid manipulating the conditions and situations
to somehow get things.

(6) Submit, mourn, purify, wash, ...

(a) Before God: 4:7-10 ... *proud ... humble*
Isa 59:1,2 ... *Lord's hand not shortened*
eg) Joshua 7:10,11,13 ... *take away*

(b) Before men: 5:16 ... *confess faults to one another*
Mt 5:23,24 ... *altar ... reconcile first*
Mk 11:25 ... *praying ... forgive*

A Turkish soldier severely beat a Christian and left him
half dead, and asked, “Tell me what your God can do to
you now!” He replied, “He can give me strength to forgive
you!”

(7) Pray, don't panic while suffering!

5:13-15 ... *prayer of faith*
2 Cor 12:7-10 ... *Paul's thorn ... prayed thrice*

God sometimes has to put us on our backs in order
to make us look up!

We can sometimes see more through tears than
through a telescope!

Conclusion

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Ask wisdom | — | Correct the <u>mind</u> |
| 2. Ask in faith | — | Confirm the <u>heart</u> |
| 3. Listen attentively | — | Circumcise the <u>ears</u> |
| 4. Guard your speech | — | Control the <u>tongue</u> |
| 5. Avoid lusting | — | Check the <u>eyes</u> |
| 6. Confess & Reconcile | — | Cleanse the <u>hands</u> |
| 7. Persevere in suffering | — | Consecrate the <u>body</u> |

Thus prayer involves our whole being before the Divine Being.

Let's give "OURSELVES" to prayer! (Acts 6:4)

Spiritual anatomy

2

Who is a True Christian?

An analytical study from the Epistle of James

Introduction

- Each book in the Bible deals with a specific theme, even though several subjects are referred to.

eg) Romans — Justification by Faith
Ephesians — Heavenly Blessings on Earth
Philippians — Joy amidst Suffering

There's one book which is dedicated to explain practical Christianity —

Epistle of James

In the entire NT, the definition for TRUE RELIGION is found in this book only — (1:27)

- This Epistle is not regional but universal in scope (geographical)
 - 1:1 ... "*scattered abroad*"
out of Palestine and settled throughout the Mediterranean world
- For all time (Historical and Chronological)
 - From "scattering" (1:1) to "Second Coming" (5:8,9)
- Both about belief & behaviour (Theological & Practical)
 - 2:19,20
 - Very practical: *waves ... tree ... fields ... horses ...*
 - "*Not just hearing but also doing*" (1:22)

- The Epistle is soft as well as strong —
eg) “*My brothers*” (14 times) 1:2,16,19; 2:1,5,14;
3:1,10; 4:11; 5:7,9,10,
12,19
“*Foolish man*” ... 2:20
“*Adulterers ... Adulteresses*” ... 4:4
- Practical but sound in theology —
Immutable Character of the Father (1:17,27)
Indwelling Presence of the Spirit (4:5)
Imminent Return of the Son (5:8,9)
- Linked to the other portions of the Bible
(Canonical, Scriptural) —
Over 40 allusions to the OT.
More than 20 to the Sermon on the Mount.
- Background of the author —
First rejected Jesus even though he was His first
eldest half brother (Mk 6:3; Jn 7:5).
Later he became a pillar of the Church (Gal 2:9).
He was called “James the Just.”
An intelligent and practical man.

Marks of a True Christian from the Epistle of James —

(1) He resists temptations relentlessly.

There is no one who will not be tempted.
There is no area where we will not be tempted.
Temptations intensify immediately after Rebirth.

Temptation is not sin —

Jesus was “*tempted like us in all points*” (Heb 4:15)

How to overcome —

- (a) Don’t blame God for temptations (Js 1:13-16)
Desires → Temptations → Sin → Death
eg) Going to a place of temptation.
Accept personal responsibility for failures.
Adam blamed “*God*” for his failure.
- (b) Put an end to double-mindedness (4:7-9)
Hate sin outrightly. (Secret desires)
Do not compromise.
Sorrow deeply for failures —
“*lament ... mourn ... weep*” (v8)
Only total surrender to God gives you power to
resist Satan (v7)
- (c) Steer clear of the sinful ways of the world.
Do not flirt around its allurements (4:4,5).
1:27c ... *unspotted by the world*
Downward trend everywhere.
God rewards those who say no to sin — (1:12)

(2) He controls his tongue diligently.

- Super-importance of tongue-control:
1:26 ... *useless religion*
3:2 ... *perfect man ... whole body*

- Difficulty of tongue-control —
 3:3-8 ... Illustrated by
 horses (v3)
 ships (v4)
 fire (v5)
 birds, beasts, fish (v7)
- How to control —
 - a) Purpose: Psa 39:1; 17:3b
 - b) Pray: Psa 141:2,3
 - c) Practise —
- + *Swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath* (Js 1:19)
 Resist the temptation to speak
 on every subject. (impulse)
- + Realize that cursing any man is actually cursing
 the Creator (3:9,10).
 Abuse, bad words.
 Never hurt anyone.
- + Hate lying and exaggeration (5:12).

(3) He relates to people lovingly.

- Knowledge is from textbooks, but wisdom is from God.
 Knowledge and Information explosion.
 An IMPERSONAL world.
 Mere *knowledge* “*puffs up*” — boasts of oneself —
 but *wisdom from Above* is “*gentle*” & “*peaceable*”
 3:14-18 ... *envy, bitterness, self-seeking, partiality*
 4:1 ... *fight and wars*

- How to improve relationships —
 - a) Stop speaking evil of anyone (4:11,12)
 No one is 100% bad or 100% good!
 - b) Do not expect perfection in others —
 Better-than-thou attitude.
 5:9 ... Realize your own imperfections,
 and that the *Judge is at the door*.
 Confess your shortcomings to your friend
 and pray for one another —
 5:16 (Everyone has failures.)
 - c) If anyone goes astray, don’t broadcast it but do all
 that’s possible to bring him back with love— (5:19,20)

(4) He treats everyone impartially.

- A long passage of 13 verses is allotted to condemn
 partiality —
 2:1-13 (Read the entire passage).
 “*Partiality*” is as serious as “*adultery*” or “*murder*”
 (2:10,11)
- Rich vs. Poor
 - It starts in the Church (2:2)
 - It leads to the courts (2:6)
- Casteism —
 Indian Society is divided into 4 major castes —
 Brahmins ... the priestly caste
 — Thought to be born from God’s mouth.

Kshatriyas ... the martial caste
— Thought to be born from God's arms.

Vaishyas ... the business caste
— Thought to be born from God's belly.

Shudras ... the labour caste (untouchables)
— Thought to be born from God's feet.

But the Bible says, "*from one man (Adam) all are created*"
(Acts 17:26,28)
Neither Jew nor Greek

God deliberately chooses the poor and the weak —
Js2:5; 1 Cor 1:26-29

(5) He helps the poor generously.

- The history book of the early Church is called
"ACTS" of the Apostles;
but today's Christianity more of "words" than "works!"

The first ACT of the early Church was Charity —
Acts 2:44,45
4:34,35

Apostle James restores this emphasis —
Js 2:14-17 ... "*Words ... Peace!*"
"*Works of Faith*"

- Hardly do we hear Sermons on Charity, but —
 - + John the Baptist (Before Christ) ... Lk 3:10,11
 - + Jesus Christ — "*What you did to the little ones*"
... Mt 25:40
 - + James, Peter & John to Paul and Barnabas
(After Christ)
"*Remember the poor*" (Gal 2:9,10)

- We can say, "Christianity is Charity!"
We can't say, "Charity is Christianity!"

Christianity today is in a distorted version.
It has extremes — leaving one for the other.

Dr. E. Stanley Jones (1884-1973):

"Spirituality without Charity is a soul without body.
Charity without spirituality is a body without soul.
One is a ghost; the other a corpse."

- Mother Teresa & Graham Staines have impacted India
more than what all our evangelism has done.

We still have "Starvation Deaths" in India.

Do all you can to uplift the poor —

Js 1:9-11 ... *exaltation ... humiliation*

Charity is not an option but an obligation —
4:17 ... *does not do good ... it is sin ...*
Not doing good is SIN. (Sin of omission)

(6) He prays for everything fervently.

Prayer is the vital breath of the Christian.
Prayer to him is what water is to fish.

- "Eat to live" vs. "Live to eat"
Similarly "Pray to live" vs. "Live to pray"
Heb 7:25b ... *Christ ever lives to pray*

CHRISTIAN — CHRIST - I - A - N
N B E
O A
V R
E

- Tradition says that James was known for his prayer.
He had thick and swollen knees.
He gives 3 practical lessons on prayer —
 - a) Priority in Prayer
1:5-8 ... *Wisdom is the principal thing.*
Solomon even in a dream (1 Ki 3:5-9).
i.e. Spiritual matters (eg. Lord's Prayer)
Name/ Kingdom/ Will/ Sins/ Temptation/ Evil
 - b) Problem in Prayer
4:1-3 ... Ask in line with God's will
— They were obviously praying
against one another.
 - c) Persistence in Prayer
5:13-18 ... Individual or Corporate prayer
 - Physical sickness (v14)
 - Spiritual problem (v16)
 - Material need (v18) (*Rain*)

(7) He trusts God for his future confidently.

4:13-16 ... *If the Lord wills ...*

- Nothing wrong in having ambitions and aspirations in life, provided we submit them to the Lord —

Psa 37:4,5 ... *Commit your way to the Lord*

In a world of economic collapse, the uncertain and unknown future is the greatest botheration and worry for youngsters —

But Jesus said: Mt 6:31-33 ... *Your Father knows*

Conclusion

Who is a True Christian?

We can identify him by —

1. How he handles temptations. ← (a) DEVIL
2. How he speaks.
3. How he relates to others.
4. How he treats people.
5. How he cares for the poor.
6. How he prays.
7. How he looks forward to future. | ← (c) GOD

- i.e.
- (a) How he resists the DEVIL
 - (b) How he relates to PEOPLE
 - (c) How he relies on GOD

The First Epistle of Peter

**Lessons for God's Servants
taught in the Student Shepherds Camp
of the Blessing Youth Mission,
in Madurai, Tamilnadu,
14-16 February 1986**



The First and the Second Epistles of Peter

Peter's original name was Simon. It was Jesus who gave him the name, "Peter" in Greek or "Cephas" in Aramaic, meaning a "stone" (Mt 10:2a; 16:18). He was a family man and a fisherman (1 Cor 9:5; Mk 1:30; Mt 4:18). He is referred to 210 times in the New Testament whereas Paul is mentioned 162 times only. The New Testament gives a more complete picture of Peter than any other disciple. Of the original 12 apostles only three were to write for the NT: Matthew, John and Peter.

Peter was the first disciple to be called and the first to be named an apostle (Mk 1:16-18; 3:14-16). His name heads every list of the Twelve (Mt 10:2; Mk 3:16; Lk 6:14). He was the first in the inner group also: At the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt 17:1); in the house of Jairus where his daughter was raised to life (Mk 5:35-42); and in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt 26:36,37). He was the spokesperson of Jesus' team. The team was called "Peter and the eleven" and "Peter and the rest of the apostles" (Acts 2:14,37). He was the first to recognize Jesus as the Messiah (Mt 16:13-17). He was the first to enter the empty tomb (Jn 20:3-8). He was the first apostle to see the Risen Lord, though he deserted Him at the most crucial hour (1 Cor 15:5). He was the first to proclaim Salvation to Gentiles (Acts 10 & 11). Erasmus (1469-1536), a Dutch theologian, says that Peter's writings are "full of apostolic dignity and authority and is

worthy of the leader among the Apostles!" Jesus gave him the "keys" of the Kingdom of Heaven (Mt 16:19a). He didn't distribute it to the twelve!

Apostle Paul calls Apostle Peter as a "pillar" (Gal 2:9). Looking at their writings, Peter is called the "Apostle of Hope," Paul the "Apostle of Faith," James the "Apostle of Works," and John the "Apostle of Love." "Glory" and "Hope" are the prominent features of Peter's first Epistle written in AD 58 (1 Pet 1:3,6-9,21). The realisation of the future bliss as near causes him to regard believers as "strangers" and "sojourners" here (1:1,17; 2:11). The Church was going through severe "trial" because of the persecution by Emperor Nero (1:6; 4:12). Peter encouraged the believers by reminding them of the important truths such as "Election of the Father, Redemption by the blood of Christ and Sanctification by the Spirit" (1:2). What an encouragement to know that the Trinitarian God was walking and working with them as the Fourth Man walked with the three young men in fire! (Dan 3:24,25). Peter's first Epistle was written when Jewish Christians were often slandered by their old communities, and Gentile Christians by their old companions (1 Pet 1:14). The letter was for Christians scattered through Roman Empire (1:1). These are places in the Northern and Western parts of Asia Minor. This is the modern Turkey. "Babylon" was considered as an early Christian code designation for "Rome" (5:13). The word "suffering" occurs over 15 times in this Epistle.

Peter first refers to the "various trials" the believers were going through at the time of his writing (1 Pet 1:6). Later in

his Epistle he foretells the future tribulation (4:12,13). He points out three living realities of our faith and life: Living Hope (1:3/vv5,7,8,11,13,21), Living Word (1:23/2:1-3), and Living Stone (2:4-10). His convictions, as expressed in his speeches in Acts, are reflected in this Epistle: 1:10/Acts 3:18; 10:43; 1:12/Acts 5:32; 1:21/Acts 3:15; 10:40; 2:7/Acts 4:11; 2:24/Acts 3:19,26; 5:30; 10:39; 4:5/Acts 10:42; 5:1/Acts 2:32; 3:15. Also his life is reflected in this Epistle. A few examples among many: 1:7/Acts 5:40; 2:2,3/Acts 2:42; 3:1-7/1 Cor 9:5; 4:1a/Jn 21:18,19; 5:2/Jn 21:15-17. Based on his experience of failures, he has given solid exhortations in his First Epistle. See pages 540-542 for a list.

When many of Jesus' disciples left Him finding His teaching too hard, He asked the twelve whether they also would like to leave Him. It was Peter who answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the WORDS of eternal life" (Jn 6:66-68). Though he was an expert fisherman, he threw the net according to the direction of the Carpenter, saying, "At Your WORD I cast my net" (Lk 5:5).

Peter's knowledge of the Old Testament is amazing. He has quoted the OT passages several times in his First Epistle. Here are some examples: 1:16/Lev 11:44; 1:24,25/Isa 40:6-8; 2:6/Isa 28:16; 2:7/Psa 118:22; 3:10-12/Psa 34:12-16; 5:5/Prov 3:34; Isa 57:15. The life of Christ is also fully covered: Incarnation (1 Pet 1:20), Sinless life (1:19; 2:22), Suffering and death (1:11; 2:23,24; 3:18; 4:1,13; 5:1), Resurrection (3:21), Ascension (3:22), Father's right hand (3:22), and Second Coming (1:13,17; 4:13; 5:1,4).

The relationship between Peter and Paul is quite encouraging. Paul after his conversion went particularly to see Peter (Gal 1:18). It's more than obvious that Peter's Epistles were written after Paul's. References in his Epistles to Paul's are numerous: 1:2/Eph 1:4-7; 1:3/Eph 1:3; 1:14/Rom 12:2; 2:6-10/Rom 9:32,33; 2:13/1 Tim 2:2-4; Rom 13:1-4; 2:16/Gal 5:13; 2:18/Eph 6:5; 3:1/Eph 5:22; 3:9/Rom 12:17; 4:9/Phil 2:14; Rom 12:13; 4:10/Rom 12:6-8; 5:1/Rom 8:18; 5:5/Eph 5:21; Phil 2:3,5-8; 5:8/1 Thess 5:6; 5:14/1 Cor 16:20. Silvanus, Paul's companion, became subsequently Peter's, and was the carrier of his first Epistle (5:12; Compare 2 Thess 1:1). Peter's Second Epistle is similar to Paul's Second Timothy: (a) Both speak of the inspiration of the Bible (2 Pet 1:20,21/2 Tim 3:16), (b) Both warn against false teachers (2 Pet 2/2 Tim 3), and (c) Both knew they would die as martyrs (2 Pet 1:13-15/2 Tim 4:6). Peter's familiarity with Paul's Epistles was self-confessed (2 Pet 3:15,16). He did not hold any grouse over Paul's face-to-face rebuke (Gal 2:11,12).

Christian life and character were quite "precious" to Peter. He spoke of precious faith (1 Pet 1:7; 2 Pet 1:1), precious blood of Christ (1 Pet 1:19), precious living stone (1 Pet 2:4), precious cornerstone (2:6), precious gentle and quiet spirit (3:4) and precious promises (2 Pet 1:4). The words of the last interview of Jesus with Peter (Jn 21:15-19) find a place in his Epistles: (1 Pet 1:8; 2:25; 5:2,4; 2 Pet 1:14). It's believed that he was arrested after writing the first Epistle and tried. He wrote the Second Epistle between his trial and execution (2 Pet 1:12-15). Tradition says he

was martyred in Rome by Nero in AD 67, crucified upside down, feeling he was unworthy to die as his Saviour did. His martyrdom was foretold by Jesus (Jn 21:18,19).

In spite of his leaning towards Judaism occasionally, for whatever reason, Peter was strong in the doctrine of the New Covenant. One of the most important doctrines of the New Testament Church, namely the “Priesthood of all Believers,” is clearly stated only by Peter (1 Pet 2:5,9). This is in the background of what God told Israel through Moses (Ex 19:6). The strong words that Peter used against false teachers in his second Epistle are unprecedented: “Wells without water, Clouds without rain, Dogs, Pigs, Scoffers, Wicked, Untaught, Unstable” (2:17,22; 3:3,16,17). This entire Epistle is a warning against heresy. The other NT Epistles which deal with heresy are 2 Timothy, 1 John and Jude.

Jesus foretold Peter before His death that he would be sifted like wheat by Satan. He added, “When you have returned to Me, strengthen your brothers” (Lk 22:31,32). That’s what Peter exactly did after Pentecost. First Peter emphasizes “grace”, and the Second Epistle emphasizes “knowledge”. His final words were, “Grow in the GRACE and KNOWLEDGE of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet 3:18). Surely he has left for us before his death a permanent “reminder” (1:13-15).

Lessons for God’s Servants from First Peter

Introduction

- A Biblical Principle of explaining/emphasizing a positive truth by a negative thing —
eg) Psa 1:1,2 ... *Counsel of ungodly* vs. *Law of God*
Rom 13:13,14 ... *Walking in darkness* vs. *Putting on Jesus*
Gal 2:20 ... *No longer I, but Christ*
- Peter employs this principle of stating the truth in 5 important places in his First Epistle.
They all have relevance to the life and ministry of one who serves the Lord.
- Peter— Personal interview by Jesus to become a Shepherd (Jn 21:15-17)
— Presents Christ as the Chief Shepherd in his Epistle (1 Pet 5:4)

Let’s take these lessons as applicable to us who are Shepherds of students.

Each chapter has one prominent lesson —

(1) Not former lusts but holiness

1:14,15

Why?

- (a) Gracious revelation of Salvation to us rather than the early prophets
vv10-12 (“Therefore ...” v13)

What a privilege!

What even Isaiah & Jeremiah understood not!

Much given ... much required!

Lives of OT characters are NOT the absolute standard!

— Failures of the Patriarchs & Prophets.

(b) The Lord who called us is holy —

vv15,16

+ The Father (v17)

No partiality.

Therefore “*fear*” (v17)

“Obedience” (v14)

+ The Son

(vv18,19)

Blood of the Lamb — no blemish/spot

eg) 1 Jn 1:7;2:1

+ The Holy Spirit (v12)

From “*heaven*” — Where there’s no sin.

The vehicle of God’s message

All these 3 combined in verse 2 —

Knowledge of the Father

Sanctification of the Spirit

Sprinkling of Christ’s blood

(c) The nature of the Word — Foundation of our faith

vv23,24 — *Incorruptible*

2:2 — “*Pure*” milk

↑

v1 — Interpersonal relationships

(2) Not stumbling at the Lord but glorifying Him

2:7-10

How?

(a) By simple trust and faith

vv6,7

Nothing glorifies God like faith!

eg) Rom 4:20-21 — Because faith is an assertion
of the “*ability*” of God!

Num 20:11-13 — Moses’ failure

Jn 11:9,10,15,40 — Lazarus —

Stumbling vs. believing/glorifying.

Faith “pleases” God!

(b) By honourable conduct before unbelievers

vv11,12

+ *Abstain* from sinful things (vv11,12)

+ *Obey* civil authorities (vv13-15)

(even to bad leaders) (vv18-24)

+ *Love* and respect fellowmen (v17)

(c) By praise and proclamation

v5 — *offer up* ↑ (praise)

v9 — *show forth* → (proclaim)

(3) Not outward attraction but inner beauty

3:3,4

i.e. Our aim should not be to impress others but
walk holy before God.

(“*in the sight of God*” — v4)

Avoid all hypocrisy.

Areas

(a) In family life (vv1-7)

+ Wife’s responsibility → Husband

Chaste and soft conduct (v2)

Gentle and quiet spirit (v4)

Submission and obedience (vv5,6)

+ Husband’s responsibility → Wife

v7 | Understand (their problems and weaknesses)
| Give honour (respect — not criticizing or
| condemning their weaknesses and mistakes)
| Share spiritual blessing — Be prayer partners

It is possible to put up an outward show of marital
happiness without attending to these inner qualities.

(b) In Church life (vv8-12)

One mind (v8)

Love and compassion (v8)

Good for evil (vv9,10,11)

Remember! God’s eyes are upon us

before His ears are open to our prayers (v12).

The searching eyes of God!

Running to and fro ... whose heart is perfect ...

2 Chr 16:9; Zech 4:10b

Superficial relationship is self-deception!

(Both life in the family and fellowship affects

“*prayers*” — vv7,12)

(c) In social life (vv13-18)

No fear of threats (v14)

Meek and soft defense for our hope (v15)

Maintaining a good conscience (v16)

(We will be put to shame

if we are cracked in this).

Maintaining an inner devotional spirit (v15)

“*made alive by the Spirit*” (v18)

“*Sanctify (set apart) the Lord in your hearts*”

— what does it mean?

= No other forces or claims should
be allowed to clash against the
quiet indwelling presence of God.

Finally, “*patience*” (v20) and “*good conscience*”
(v21)

Exemplified in Noah’s life.

(4) Not fumbling but rejoicing

4:12,13

No suffering or problem or disappointment should surprise us but inspire us to joy!

Examples

(a) Evil speaking against us (v4)

Our reactions —

+ Commit the judgment to God's hand.

vv5-7a,17-19

+ Intensify praying

v7b

+ Increase love and hospitality

vv8,9

+ Make sure you are clean

v15

+ Don't take it as a personal shame but an occasion to glorify God

vv14,16

(b) Trials and sufferings

+ Realize we are partaking of Christ's sufferings

(vv12,13)

Phil 1:29,30 — Should not try to escape this.

Col 1:24 — Paul — lacking in His body

Christ's physical body vs. His spiritual body

+ Make fresh and deeper commitments

5:6

Throw everything upon Him!

5:7

(Remove all human props and self-reliance).

Rejoice in HIM alone ... (1:6-8)

+ Resist the devil in faith

5:8,9

Declare victory for all the other saints also! (v9)

(5) Not to be ministered unto but to minister

5:3/2:16

How

a) Serving not by constraint but willingly

v2

An enthusiasm and willingness.

Should never consider this a burden.

Serve Him gladly (Psa 100:2)

Don't be like the people of Malachi 3:13,14!

The elder son's attitude (Lk 15:28-31)

Never say the ministry is a burden, but a blessing!

b) Not for dishonest gain but eagerly ...

v2

Don't look for any personal profit but only the glory of God.

(Not job satisfaction or sense of fulfillment, primarily)

Don't fish for people's applause.

Not applauded here, but rewarded there!

Honesty in reporting — Not aiming at impressing the leaders and earning their favour.

There will be no competition within a team if there's no seeking of self-glory.

Honesty and willingness to accept mistakes.

Faithfulness in money matters and handling material things.

c) Not lording over but being examples (v3)

Leaders, not lords!

Guiding, not dictating.

Not demanding from others what we cannot do ourselves.

Clergy vs. Laity — Wrong concept

(All are *kings* and *priests*)
(2:5,9)

Understand that people are in need of "help"
(Mt 9:35-38)

A shepherd is a helper.

Conclusion

These are brief exhortations of the "true grace of God"
(v12)

1:10,13 ... *Salvation ... grace*

2:3,10 ... *tasted the glorious Lord*

3:7 ... *Wives ... vessels of grace*

4:10 ... *gifts ... grace*

5:5,10 ... *humble ... grace*

"Stand" firm on this! (5:12)

The Trinitarian God

(An analytical study of First Peter)

Introduction

a) **Worship** God for His character (2:5,9)

b) **Walk** according to His character (2:11,12)

A) The Father

1. Impartial Father (1:17)

— Reverential conduct

2. Longsuffering God (3:20)

— Obedience

3. Faithful Creator (4:19)

— Commitment in suffering

4. Mighty God (5:6)

— Carefreeness & Humility

B) The Son

1. Spotless Lamb (1:19)

— Holy walk (vv20-22)

2. Gracious Lord (2:3)

— Love for the Word & saints (vv1,2)

3. Chief Shepherd (5:4/2:25)

— Spirit of service

4. Sovereign Christ (4:11)

— Glorifying God

C) The Holy Spirit

1. Heaven-sent Spirit (1:12)
— Sobriety & Expectation (v13)
2. Glorious Spirit (4:14)
— Joy in Suffering (vv12,13)

Conclusion

The Bible abounds with so many characteristics of God.
Each of them inspires us to **worship** Him
and **walk** before Him accordingly.

That's the meaning of 2 Corinthians 3:18 —

*“We all, with unveiled face, beholding as
in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are
being transformed into the same image
from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit
of the Lord.”*

Peter's Exhortations

(From First Peter)

1. DO NOT LET SATAN GET YOU INTO
A COMPROMISING POSITION (1 Pet 1:14-17)

Do not fashion or mould yourselves according to your former desires. Be careful about your living. I put myself in a compromising position once and thus denied my Lord.

2. DO NOT WARM YOURSELVES AT THE WORLD'S
FIRE (2:9-11)

You are a special people. You are the only light God has in this dark world of sin. You are a people redeemed for God's own possessions. I warmed myself at the world's fire (Mk 14:54,67). I should never have left the Lord's side; I should have stayed with Him and borne the persecution. The unsaved will not understand why you do not continue to run with them (1 Pet 4:4)

3. DO NOT ALLOW YOURSELVES TO GET INTO
A SLEEPY STUPOR (1:13)

I did not gird up the loins of my mind. I slept in the garden when I should have been wide awake (Mk 14:37-41)

4. DO NOT BE BOASTFUL AND SELF-RELIANT (5:5)

Clothe or gird yourselves with humility. I was boastful and self-reliant. I would not listen to the warnings of my Lord (Lk 22:31-34). His look of disappointed love broke my heart (Lk 22:61,62).

5. WATCH OUT FOR THE DEVIL TO TRY

AND TRIP YOU UP (5:8)

Curb every passion and be on the alert. The devil is seeking prey. The devil came unexpectedly to me and I fell (Mt 26:74).

6. RESIST SATAN STEADFASTLY IN THE FAITH (5:9)

I did not resist, I was passive and failed to meet his subtle attack in the all-conquering Name of my blessed Master (see James 4:7).

7. BE READY TO GIVE A DECENT STRAIGHTFORWARD ANSWER TO THOSE WHO SINCERELY ASK OF YOUR FAITH IN YOUR REDEEMER (3:15,16)

I failed miserably here also (Jn 18:17). You must give a ready and logical defence of your faith.

8. SEE THAT YOU LOVE YOUR BROTHERS PURELY

(1:22; 4:8)

I was hypocritical. I did not have a pure heart of love toward my brothers, and I slighted them. I told the Lord that I was superior to them in my loyalty to Him (Mt 26:33).

9. DO NOT BE A BUSY-BODY (4:15)

I was a troublesome meddler. I pried into the life of John by asking, "What shall this man do?" and was severely rebuked by the Master (Jn 21:21).

10. REJOICE WHEN YOU ARE REPROACHED

FOR THE NAME OF CHRIST (4:14)

I did not rejoice when the opportunity came to me to identify myself with the Lord's Name. I disowned that precious Name (Mt 26:69-74).

11. SANCTIFY CHRIST AS LORD IN YOUR HEARTS

AS A REMEDY FOR BACKSLIDING (3:15)

If I had set apart Christ as Lord in my affections, I would not have denied Him!

(Selected)

The Second Epistle of Peter

— Theme —
“Godly Life”

**Studies given in the
Blessing Centre, Hubli,
26-28 November 1982**



Studies in Second Peter

Theme: “**Godly Life**”

Chapter 1

(A) Possibility of (or Provision for) Godly Life (vv1-4)

(B) Practice of Godly Life (vv5-8)

(C) Problems against Godly Life (vv9-21)

(A) Possibility of Godly Life (vv1-4)

(v1) Precious Faith

through Righteousness of God and Christ

(v2) Multiplied Grace and Peace

through Knowledge of God and Christ (3:18)

(v3) All things to life and godliness

through God’s divine Power

(v4) Divine Nature

through God’s great and precious promises

Escape *corruption* ... Embrace *faith* ... Experience

peace and *grace* ... Exercise *godliness* ... Enjoy!

(B) Practice of Godly Life (vv5-8)

1. Faith

2. + Virtue

3. + Knowledge

4. + Self-control

+7 5. + Patience (perseverance)

6. + Godliness

7. + Brotherly kindness

8. + Love

1. Faith without Virtue (goodness) (No guile)

Js 2:17-20

Eg) Nathaniel ... Jn 1:47-50

Barnabas ... Acts 11:24

Mt 5:16 ... *Good works*

2. Virtue without Knowledge

Mt 10:16 ... *wise serpents, harmless doves*

Rom 16:18-20 ... *wise in good... simple about evil*

3. Knowledge without Self-control

1 Cor 8:1,7-13 ... *food ... stumbling to others*

4. Self-control without Patience

Heb 10:36-39 ... *No drawing back*

5. Patience without Godliness

1 Pet 2:20 ... *Do good ... suffer*

6. Godliness without Brotherly kindness

1 Jn 4:20,21 ... *love God ... but hate brother?*

7. Brotherly kindness without Love

1 Cor 13:3 Self-interest, ... *charity ... no love*

Promise: v8,

“*No barrenness, but fruitfulness*”

i.e. Faith without Virtue is barren.

Virtue without Knowledge is barren.

Knowledge without Self-control is barren.

Self-control without Patience is barren.

Patience without Godliness is barren.
Godliness without Brotherly kindness is barren.
Brotherly kindness without Love is barren.

(C) Problems or Pressures against Godly Life (vv9-21)

- a) Shortsightedness — “*cannot see afar off*”
(v9)
God’s ultimate intention — “To make us like Him”
Eph 4:13
- b) Forgetting the Justification/Cleansing
(v9)
Peter’s effort to remind (vv12-18)
We must *exhort one another* (Heb 3:13,14)
- c) Neglecting the Word (or) Slighting the Scriptures
(vv19-21)
Fruitfulness + Godliness are the result of Word-study
and exercise (2 Tim 3:16,17; Psa 1:1-3).

Chapter 2

Key Verse:

v9, “*The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out
of temptations ... and reserve the unjust ...
to be punished*”

Preservation of the godly and Punishment to the ungodly

(1) Testimonies to this Truth

(“an example” ... v6)

Compare with the Epistle of Jude —

- (a) Preservation: Noah (v5)
— “*Righteousness Preacher*” (warning)
Lot (v7)
— “*Righteous Man*” (vexing)
- (b) Punishment: Angels (v4)
— “*sin*”
Old world (v5)
— “*ungodliness*”
Sodom & Gomorrah (v6)
— “*unlawful*” (v8)
Balaam (vv15,16)
— “*covetousness*”

(2) Temptations (v9)

Threats to the godly ...
chiefly by false teachers
(v1)

Tricks of these teachers

- (a) *Heresies* (v1)
 - Twisting the Scriptures
 - “*Secret*” canvassing (Without the knowledge
of the elders)
 - Loosening the demands of Christ as “LORD”
 - Popularity, majority (v2)
- (b) *Covetousness* (v3)
 - Attraction to materialistic life ...
“*feigned words*”

- Covetous practices (v14)
(Shortcut methods — more money, little effort)
- Ministry for money (Balaam ... v15)

(c) Permissiveness

- *Fleshly lusts, uncleanness* (v10)
- *Revelings* (Riot) (v13)
- Pictures, Books, Music, etc.
- Unceasing craving for lustful look (v14)
- Alluring those who “are just escaping” from those in error (v18)
eg Homosexuals
- Promising so-called “*liberty*” (v19)

(d) Despising authority (v10)

- Presumptuousness (v10)
- Self-will (v10)
(arrogance, pride, etc.)
- Slandorous accusation against celestial beings
(vv10,11) (evil)
- Loose talk about things they don’t understand
(v12)
(Many things are hidden from us ...
Can’t assume to know everything and
analyse and judge.)

(e) Covering up backsliding (vv20-22)

- Continue in the fellowship (v13)
- Showiness ... “*wells without water*”
(v17) “*clouds without rain*”

- “No power of the Spirit” ... Mere form! (2 Tim 3:5)
- Clever talk (2 Pet 2:18)
- Impression of doctrinal accuracy (v19)

(3) Tenets for Triumph

- (a) Continue growing —
“*in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour
Jesus Christ*” (v20)
- (b) Continue walking —
“*in the way of righteousness*” (v21)
- (c) Continue obeying —
“*the Holy Commandment*” (v21)

Chapter 3

Introduction

Chapter 1 — Possibility of Godly Life
Practice of Godly Life
Pitfalls in Godly Life

Ch 2 — Preservation of the godly

Ch 3 — Promise to the godly
(v13)

(A) Preparation	(B) Precautions
for	against
Promotion	Pitfalls

(A) Preparation for Promotion

- (1) Maintain and move forward in HOLINESS.**
— “*pure minds*” (v1)

- + 1 Pet 1:13-16 ... *Sober mind*
- + 2 Cor 11:3 ... *Simple mind*
- + Phil 4:7-9 ... *Sound mind*
- “repentance” (v9)
Rev 22:11
- “all holy conversation and godliness” (v11)
All areas of life (1 Pet 1:15)
Personal, Family, Social, Ministerial, etc.
- “NH & NE ... righteousness” (v13)
1 Jn 3:7
- “peace ... without spot ... blameless” (v14)
Relationships (Heb 12:14)
- “salvation” (v15)
Heb 9:28 — Salvation future
Phil 2:12,13 — Work out your own salvation

(2) Meditate and Embrace GOD’S WORD.

- “Words of the Holy Prophets” (v2)
The Old Testament (2 Pet 1:21)
Lk 24:44-48 Christ in all the Scriptures
:25-27,32
- “Commandment of the Apostles” (v2)
The New Testament
Mt 28:20 ... Great commission
Acts 2:42 ... Early Church

- “the Promise” (v4)
“His Promise” (v9)
“His Promise” (v13)
Heb 6:11-15 ... Faith and Patience
- “The Word of God” (v5)
“The same Word” (v7)
“Written ... Epistles ... Scriptures” (vv15,16)
Mt 7:24,25 Foundation on Rock
1 Jn 2:17 Will of God ... abide ...

(3) Mind Eternity and love His Appearing.

- “one day ... 1000 years” (v8)
Glory of eternity inexplicable
Rom 8:16-18
- “longsuffering towards us ... that ALL” (vv9,15)
Appreciate His delay in view of world evangelisation!
Mt 24:14; Acts 1:11,8
- “Heavens pass away... earth... burned” (vv10,12)
Realise the temporary nature
of this world ...
Avoid earthly-mindedness
Phil 3:17-21
- “Looking for ... hastening unto ...” (v12)
“Look for such things” (v14)
Love His appearing!
2 Tim 4:7,8; Rev 22:17,20

(B) Precautions against Pitfalls

(1) Forget not the prophetic predictions!

“stir up ... reminder” (v1)

“be mindful” (v2)

“knowing this” (v3)

(2) Limit not God to your understanding!

“not ignorant ... 1 day ... 1000 years” (v8)

“slackness ... longsuffering” (v9)

Isa 55:8,9 God’s ways vs. Our ways

(3) Sleep not but be watchful!

“day of the Lord ... thief ... night” (v10)

“be diligent ... be found” (v14)

Mt 24:42-46 — Found doing

(4) Twist not difficult Scripture passages!

“Hard ... understood ... destruction” (v16)

Believe it AS IT IS (Rev 22:18,19)

(5) Lose not steadfastness and stop not growth!

(vv17,18)

Growth is the sure antidote for backsliding!

The Book of Jonah

- 1. Lessons on Prayer**
- 2. Lessons on Evangelism**

**Outlines of Sermons preached
in an All-night Prayer Meeting, Erode, India
1 September 1978**



The Book of Jonah

The Prophets of old are usually classified as Major Prophets and Minor Prophets. It's not to mean that the message of the Minor Prophets are less important but their written messages are smaller in bulk than the others. The chronological order of the Major Prophets is Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, and that of the Minor Prophets is Jonah, Joel, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. Two of the Minor Prophets, namely Jonah and Joel, ministered earlier than Isaiah. As such Jonah is the oldest, perhaps close to Elisha.

The experience of Jonah happened during the reign of King Jeroboam II of Israel (784-772 BC). He is first introduced in the Bible as "God's Servant" (2 Ki 14:25). He was probably one of the leaders in the "School of the Prophets" when Elisha was nearing the end of his remarkable ministry. Jonah hails from Gath Hepher, a village near Nazareth. While introducing himself to the mariners, his first statement was, "I am a Hebrew" (Jon 1:9). The name "Jonah" means "Dove." He flew away as fast and as far as he could! In Chapter 1 we meet him as a "silly dove" (Hos 7:11). In Chapter 2 he is a "trembling dove" (Hos 11:11). Chapter 3 presents him as a "messenger dove" (Gen 8:8-10). Finally in Chapter 4 he is a "mourning dove" (Isa 38:14).

When God commissioned Jonah to go to Nineveh, he succumbed to selfish patriotism and religious bigotry. Nineveh was the capital of the then world kingdom, that is Assyria, which was the rising world power destined to

destroy Israel (Isa 7:17; Hos 9:3; 10:6,7; 11:5). The Assyrians were worshipping a multitude of gods and goddesses. Assyrian brutality and cruelty were legendary. The Assyrians were known to impale their enemies on stakes in front of their towns and hang their heads from trees in the king's garden. They reportedly covered the city wall with skins of their victims! This is what God told about Nineveh: "Their wickedness has come up before Me" (Jon 1:2). Jonah decided that he would rather quit his prophetic ministry than preach to such people. That's what's meant by the statement, "Jonah arose to flee *from the presence of the Lord*" (v3a).

The character of Nineveh is highlighted by Prophet Nahum (Nah 1:1a; 3:1-4,19). God calls Nineveh as an "exceedingly great city" (Jon 1:2; 3:2,3; 4:11). It was obviously a mega-mega city like Tokyo in Japan which is the largest city in the world today. Jakarta in Indonesia comes next, and Delhi third. Nineveh's population was mind-boggling those days. The young infants alone were 1,20,000! (4:11). Jonah thought that if Nineveh repents and God spares it, then Israel would perish! He was not able to catch the "compassion" of God in asking him carry the message of repentance and forgiveness to the Ninevites who were anti-Israelites (vv2,11). His argument perhaps was, "I would rather disobey God than see my enemies saved from judgment!" Did not the early disciples hesitate so much to go to the non-Jews with the Gospel in spite of Christ's clear blueprint for world evangelisation? (Acts 1:8; 8:1; 11:1-3, 19-21). There are simply too many Jonahs in South India, atleast in Tamilnadu, disobeying God's call to go to the unevangelized North but staying in Tamilnadu evangelizing the evangelized!

Jonah is a strange paradox: A prophet of God, and yet a runaway from God. A preacher of repentance, yet one who repines at repentance. He was not always a reluctant prophet. He was once a prophet of the message of restoration for Israel (2 Ki 14:25). After chastisement he became a powerful prophet with the message of repentance for the Gentiles (Jonah 3). The Bible paints both sides of its characters, good and bad. Even Abraham and David are not exceptions. This balances God's "love" and His "holiness." Tarshish is probably what's now Spain. Paul speaks against anyone having monopoly over God's grace. He challenges, "Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also" (Rom 3:29; 9:24). This is what Jonah failed to understand. God desires "all men" to repent (Acts 10:34,35; 1 Tim 2:3,4; 2 Pet 3:9). He has a right to show mercy to whomever He wills (Ex 33:19; Rom 9:15).

There are rationalists who argue that the story of Jonah is a fiction or a parable, not history. But Jesus refers to it as a historical fact (Mt 12:39-41; Lk 11:29,30). He used it in a good sense only, comparing His own burial with his stay inside the fish. Jesus made a typical use of two OT incidents: (a) Brazen serpent and (b) Swallowed Jonah. Just like Jonah was miraculously preserved inside the fish and delivered, so He would be in the grave three days and would be miraculously raised to life. So the very first prophet had an introductory message of Christ's resurrection!

Bible scholars have suggested numerous outlines for the Book of Jonah. Here are some of them: (A) Chapter 1, Jonah is fleeing from God; Ch 2, he is praying to God; Ch 3, he is speaking for God; Ch 4, he is learning from God. (B) Ch 1, Jonah and the storm; Ch 2, Jonah and the fish;

Ch 3, Jonah and the city; Ch 4, Jonah and the Lord. (C) Ch 1, The prodigal prophet; Ch 2, the praying prophet; Ch 3, the preaching prophet; Ch 4, the pouting prophet. (D) Ch 1, Jonah on his back, sleeping (1:5); Ch 2, Jonah on his knees, praying (2:1-9); Ch 3, Jonah on his feet, preaching (3:4); Ch 4, Jonah on his face, mourning (4:2,3,8). Each outline approaches the book from a different perspective.

The Book of Jonah teaches us God's sovereignty over nature. He can hurl a storm at people (1:4). He can raise up a plant miraculously as well as a worm to kill it (4:6,7). He can use a great fish to swallow and save His servant (1:17). The phenomena of nature is seen throughout: Wind, Storm, Sea, Dry Land, Fish, Herd, Flock, Plant, Worm, Sun and Wind. The word "prepared" occurs five times: God "prepared" a great wind (1:4), a great fish (1:17), a gourd (4:6), a worm (v7) and a hot east wind (v8). Yes, God orders our life in all situations whether we obey Him or not!

The Book of Jonah is a missionary book. Jonah's 3-day free stay in the "Fish Hotel" gave him ample time to prepare his next sermon with the text, "Salvation is of the Lord" (2:9c). Even if we don't fully cooperate with God, His missionary purpose cannot be frustrated or thwarted. The entire city of Nineveh repented by one man's message. Will not God do such a thing again for our cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai? Will He not raise such a prophetic preacher amidst us? No place is too hard and no person is too hard for God. The greatest miracle in the entire Book of Jonah is the repentance of the entire city of Nineveh (3:5-10). Let's expect a similar thing from God for India that the entire Nation may turn to the Living God, starting from the Prime Minister to the Chief Ministers and all men and women! Can it not happen? Should it not happen? Say, Amen!

1

Lessons on Prayer

(An analytical study from the Book of Jonah)

Introduction

A sign message for us in this generation

Mt 12:38-41; 16:4

Book of Jonah — a book on Prayer for

“Worldwide Revival & Evangelisation”

4 Chapters — 4 Prayers — One in each ...

— Each prayer with a principle following.

Prayer 1 — That of mariners — 1:5,6,14

Prayer 2 — That of Jonah — 2:1-9

Prayer 3 — That of Nineveh — 3:5-8

Prayer 4 — That of Jonah — 4:2,3

Prayer 1 ... (1:5,6,14) — By the mariners

The Principle of “REMOVAL” (1:15)

“A number of removal operations necessary for successful praying”

(a) Jonah of “PRIDE”

— “*I am a Hebrew*” (1:9)

— “*Hebrew of Hebrews*” (Phil 3:5)

— First Hebrew ... Abraham (Gen 14:13)

— The pride of the Pharisees (Mt 3:9)

— Similar manifestation (Jn 8:33)

But he disobeyed!

6 things obeyed —

Sea (Jon 1:4)

Fish (1:17)

Ninevites (3:10)

Gourd (4:6)

Worm (4:7)

Wind (1:4a; 4:8)

But one man disobeyed!

(b) Jonah of “HYPOCRISY”

— “*I fear the Lord*” (1:9)

— Fear vs. Obedience (Eccl 12:13)

— 7 “Woe’s” to hypocrites (Mt 23),

especially, 23:27,28

No use/good in praying without such removals (1:13)

Prayer 2 ... (2:1-9) — By Jonah

The Principle of “REMEMBRANCE” (2:7,9)

(a) *Remember “the LORD”* (2:7)

— Getting involved in the things of the Lord to the extent of FORSAKING THE LORD Himself! (Isa 1:4,10-15)

— Heavenly worship

... no temple

... no sun

... no moon

but the LORD (Rev 21:22,23)

“Be filled with God!”

- (b) Angry with God on a material issue ...
 Destruction of the gourd (4:9)
 Blaming/accusing God (Js 1:13-17)
 — Wrath of man vs. Righteousness of God
 (vv19,20)

The Principle of “REPENTANCE” (3:8)

[illegible]

- Prayer 4** ... (4:2,3) — By Jonah

Reproving of the anger of the prophet twice —

- 564

2

Lessons on world-evangelisation

(An analytical study from the Book of Jonah)

(A) The Great City

4 mentionings of the phrase “the great city”

1:2 3:2

3:3 4:11

1)	1:2 ... “wickedness”	Go and preach, they await the message.
2)	3:2 ... “darkness”	
3)	3:3 ... “great size”	
4)	4:11 ... “great grace”	

(B) The Lord speaks ...

4 times the Lord speaks ...

- 1) Commission (1:1,2)
- 2) Re-commission (3:1,2)
- 3) Correction (4:4)
- 4) Re-correction (4:9-11)

Commission — Through the Spirit (Acts 1:2)

Re-commission — Through the Word (to us) (Mk 16:15)

Correction — Through the Spirit (Examples in Acts)

Re-correction — Through the Word (2 Tim 3:16)

Jonah & Missions

- The Book of Jonah ends with a question by God.
Jonah did not answer it.
God wants us to answer it!

- The problem with Jonah was —
He had a right theology,
but he failed in practicals!

He had a theoretical knowledge of —

- a) The lostness of man
“worthless idols” (2:8)
- b) The Salvation of God
“Salvation is of the Lord” (2:9)
- c) The compassion of God
“I know You are a gracious God” (4:2b)

But he was not ready to translate it into action —

He “repented” (2:4b)
He “prayed” (2:7b)
He “worshipped” (2:9)
It was all for his own good!
i.e. his personal deliverance

Read Chapter 2 to find out how selfish his prayer was!

It’s all “my” and “me.”

He says,
“They” are lost (2:8),
but “I” will praise God (2:9).

On the other hand,
we see Apostle Paul making the same statement,
but immediately translating it into action —

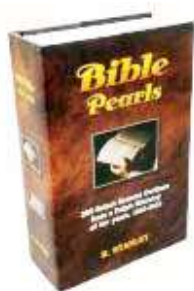
His theology ... Rom 10:11-13

*“Everyone, Jew or non-Jew,
who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved”*

His action ... Rom 10:14,15

“How shall they hear without a preacher?”

All our missiological knowledge must drive us to mission
fields. The need of the hour is not for more Missiologists
but Missionaries!



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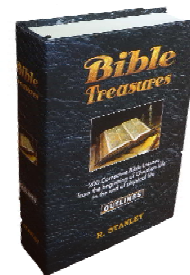
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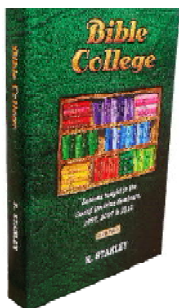
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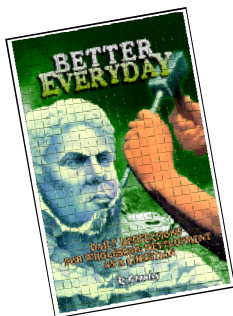
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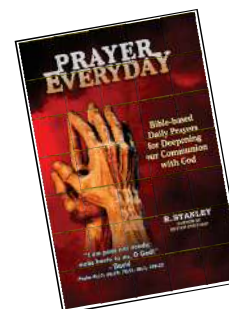
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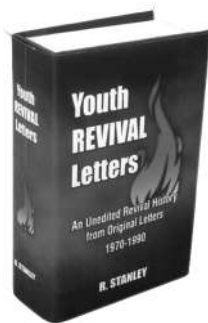
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Last Lines

- These Outlines of the 12 Books of the Bible, developed and sermons delivered on them, cover a period of 40 years. My growth in the understanding of God's Word during these 4 decades must be borne in mind by the readers.
- You can use these Outlines as desired to edify, exhort and encourage the audience.
- My commitment to the supremacy and the sufficiency of the Scriptures from the day of my rebirth in 1962 remains irrevocable these 60 years. Every page in this volume would attest to it.
- Remember me before the Throne of Grace with the prayer of the Psalmist in Psalm 71:17,18.